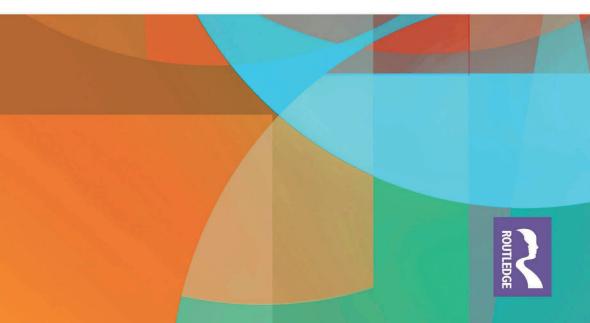# BEDE AND TIME

COMPUTUS, THEOLOGY AND HISTORY IN THE EARLY MEDIEVAL WORLD

Máirín MacCarron

Bede and Time

The Venerable Bede (c. 673–735) was the leading intellectual figure of the early Anglo-Saxon Church, and his extensive corpus of writings encompassed themes of exegesis, computus (dating of Easter and construction of calendars), history and hagiography. Rather than look at these works in isolation, Máirín MacCarron argues that Bede's work in different genres needs to be read together to be properly understood. This book provides the first integrated analysis of Bede's thought on time and demonstrates that such a comprehensive examination allows a greater understanding of Bede's writings on time, illuminating the place of time and chronology in his other works. Bede was an outstanding intellect whose creativity and ingenuity were apparent in various genres of writing. This book argues that in innovatively combining computus, theology and history, Bede transformed his contemporaries' understanding of time and chronology.

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in the Early Medieval World

Máirín MacCarron

In memory of Margaret MacCarron (1943–2017)

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Acknowledgements

This book began life as a 20-minute paper that asked if Bede's decision to use *Anno Domini* dating in his *Historia ecclesiastica gentis anglorum* could be better understood if we were to reflect on what counting from the Incarnation meant to him. My first forays in this area were well received, but it quickly became clear that I would have to learn about computus if I wanted to say anything meaningful on time and chronology. As I formulated plans for this new research direction, I received tremendous encouragement from Jennifer O'Reilly and Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, and without them this book would not have been written. Jennifer was my doctoral supervisor and her support in all things was invaluable: I have wanted to ask her advice so often and about so much since her unexpected death in February 2016, but I know this book is far better for the conversations we had in its early years. I am also most thankful to Jennifer's husband, Terry, for his unwavering interest and support. As I was incredibly fortunate to work with Jennifer for my doctorate, my good luck was replicated with Dáibhí Ó Cróinín as my postdoctoral mentor: Dáibhí has been an exemplary guide of irrepressible good humour and unfathomable generosity. I am also deeply indebted to Peter Darby and Jo Story for their enthusiasm and interest from the very beginning of this project; to Immo Warntjes for greatly encouraging and assisting my computistical endeavours; and to Julia Hillner for sage advice and generous support.

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Abbreviations

CCSL	*Corpus Christianorum Series Latinae* (Turnhout 1953–)
EHR	*The English Historical Review* (Oxford 1886–)
MGH	*Monumenta Germaniae Historica* (Leipzig; Hannover; Berlin 1826–)
PL	*Patrologia cursus completes. Series Latina*, ed. J.P. Migne (Paris 1841–80)
SC	*Sources Chrétienne* (Paris 1942–)
SLH	*Scriptores Latini Hiberniae* (Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies 1955–)

Introduction

Computus, contexts and controversies

> What, then, is time? If no one asks of me, I know; if I wish to explain to him who asks, I know not.
>
> Augustine of Hippo, 354–430[1]

> What is time? Time is the interval extending from the beginning to the end.
>
> 'Munich computist', early eighth century[2]

There are many different answers to the question 'what is time'? Augustine of Hippo's response features in the midst of a lengthy philosophical discussion of time in book 11 of his *Confessions*, by the end of which the readers who thought they knew what time was no longer know. The second quotation opens the *Munich computus*, an early eighth-century Irish textbook on time reckoning.[3] Computus was the medieval science of time reckoning and calendar construction concerned primarily, but not entirely, with calculating the date of Easter. Manuals on this topic have been known as computus texts since the early Middle Ages. They typically explain the different divisions of time – such as hours, days and years – outline methods for calculating Easter, and often provide discussions of chronology. The beautiful simplicity of *Munich*'s response to the question is in keeping with a work concerned with measuring time and the creation of accurate calendars. Attempts to understand time are evident in different genres of writing in the early Middle Ages, such as matter-of-fact concerns with timekeeping, theological discussions, historical writings and wide-ranging philosophical inquiries.

The Venerable Bede (c. 673–735) neither asked nor answered the question of 'What is time' in his extensive body of writings, but time was a major theme in his work. For him, time was one of the ways in which this life differs from the life to come; the transient nature of earthly life is opposed to the timelessness of the heavenly life, for time is intrinsic to Creation.[4] In the preface to his *De natura rerum*, written at the beginning of his career and as a companion to his first work on time, *De temporibus* (703), Bede referred to 'the broad ages of fleeting time' and urged those who study the stars to focus 'on the light of the everlasting day'.[5] He more forcefully expressed these sentiments in the conclusion of his second work of computus, *De temporum ratione*, completed in 725: *Ergo noster libellus de*

uolobili ac fluctiuago temporum lapsu descriptus oportunum de aeterna stabilitate ac stabili aeternitate habeat finem ('And so our little book concerning the fleeting and wave-tossed course of time comes to a fitting end in eternal stability and stable eternity').[6] Bede showed little interest in philosophical discussions such as how we perceive time, which had received a virtuoso treatment from Augustine in the *Confessions*; and, whereas the unidentified 'Munich computist' is concerned with what occurs between the beginning and the end of time, Bede's attention also included the end of time and what comes after. This concern did not diminish the importance of correctly ordering time in this life, however. For Bede, the natural divisions of time were used to structure life for the monastic day and the liturgical year, and especially to determine the great Easter cycle that harmonises the luni-solar calendar in perpetuity.

The celebration of Easter was for Bede, following traditions of patristic exegesis, a sign of the heavenly life which scripture frequently depicts as a banquet or wedding feast.[7] Debate and contention about the date of Easter undermines the unity of the Church by literally preventing people from breaking bread together, thereby threatening the sacramental significance of the festival. Bede, following Eusebius, used imagery of feasting and fasting to illustrate the impact of dissension over the date of Easter. In the *Vita Constantini*, Eusebius wrote that congregations were divided and in disarray because some people were fasting while others were celebrating; and similarly, Bede highlighted the disunion in the royal household of Northumbria, noting that Easter was sometimes celebrated twice in one year, with King Oswiu keeping Easter Sunday while Queen Eanflæd was maintaining her Lenten fast and observing Palm Sunday.[8] Celebrating Easter correctly and together is an indication of a community's spiritual health and foreordains that they will enjoy their eternal reward together.[9] For Bede, then, observing the true order of time was a matter of faith and devotion to God, which is why the Easter Controversy featured so prominently in his works.

Bede and the Insular Easter Controversy

Unlike Christmas, which falls on the same date in the Julian/Gregorian calendar every year, Easter is a moveable feast that commemorates the Resurrection on the first Easter Sunday.[10] The first Easter was connected to the Jewish festival of Passover, itself a moveable feast based on the lunar calendar. However, the Gospel accounts of the Passion are not entirely consistent in dating the last events of Jesus's life. The synoptic gospels (Matthew 26; Mark 14; and Luke 22) present the Last Supper as Jesus's Passover meal, while John's gospel presents Jesus as the Passover lamb who died at the time the lambs were slaughtered in the temple for the Passover meal (John 19).[11] This uncertainty has added to the difficulty of dating Easter, which is calculated according to three distinct and independent divisions of time:

1   the week
2   the lunar month
3   the solar year

The rules about the celebration of Easter evolved during the first four centuries of the Church, and settled on the application of three principles: Easter must be celebrated on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the **vernal equinox**.[12] The first of these principles, that Easter should be on a Sunday, is the most straightforward to implement and was most probably articulated in response to a dispute in the early Church between those who believed Easter should be celebrated on Sunday and those who preserved the link with the Jews' celebration of Passover, regardless of the day of the week.[13] The full moon falls on the fourteenth day of the lunar month, known as *luna* xiv, and those who kept Easter on this day came to be known as **Quartodecimans**. They were ostensibly following the practise of the apostle John, and were tolerated in the Early Church, for example, when Polycarp and Pope Anicetus agreed to disagree at Rome c. AD 150.[14] However, as time progressed, and the Church increasingly asserted its independence from its Jewish inheritance, this diversity in unity became less acceptable and ultimately led to Quartodecimans being seen as heretics and schismatics.[15] One of the challenges in studying the Easter Controversy is that customs that were at one time acceptable and tolerated, later became anathema, and quartodecimanism is a good example of this. Its spectre loomed over the Church in places where it had never been practised, and it was one of the charges levelled against Irish clerics in Northumbria in the seventh and early eighth centuries, as we shall see.

From the fourth century onwards, Easter was predominantly celebrated on Sunday, but the other two provisions were more difficult to apply. For what exactly was the first Sunday after the first full moon? That is, if the full moon fell on Sunday, was that Easter Sunday or should Easter be delayed by a week? This becomes a question of the **lunar limits** used to determine Easter, which follows from the provision of Exodus that, after the Passover, on the evening of the fourteenth day (Exod 12:6), there is a seven-day period where the Israelites were commanded to eat unleavened bread (Exod 12:15). This is the period within which Easter Sunday falls, but there are three different interpretations of these lunar limits: *luna* xiv–xx; *luna* xv–xxi; and *luna* xvi–xxii. The protagonists of the second two sets of limits believed that *luna* xiv could not be Easter Sunday as that celebration of Easter begins during the night of Saturday/Sunday, which is *luna* xiii, and therefore such an Easter would be celebrated in advance of the full moon. Those who argued for *luna* xvi–xxii believed that the Crucifixion took place on *luna* xiv so Easter Sunday could not be commemorated before *luna* xvi; however, opponents of this view argued that celebrating Easter on *luna* xxii goes against Scripture as its precepts concern the eight-day period of *luna* xiv–xxi, and there is no canonical support for celebrating on *luna* xxii.[16] Ultimately, the lunar limits of *luna* xv–xxi became widely accepted, as they were most compatible with scriptural interpretation, but these questions persisted in Britain and Ireland into the eighth century.

The third principle for determining Easter, that it should follow the vernal equinox, ensures that Easter falls in spring. This places Easter in the first month of the year, like Passover (Exod 12:2), and at a point in the calendar when daylight begins to exceed darkness. Day and night are of equal length at the vernal and autumnal equinoxes, and after the vernal equinox daylight increases as darkness decreases. It is symbolic that Easter is celebrated at such a time as it represents

the ultimate victory of light over darkness, and life over death.[17] However, efforts to determine Easter in relation to the vernal equinox were complicated by disagreement about the date of the vernal equinox. The traditional Roman date was 25 March; however, because the **Julian calendar** is slightly longer than the **solar year**, over time the calendar advances on the sun meaning that the equinox began to occur earlier than the 25 March. Alexandrian mathematicians, who were the most advanced in the ancient world, recognised this and re-dated the equinox to the 21 March, which was the date they used when calculating Easter.[18] This introduced another level of complexity when attempting to reconcile different methods for dating Easter. For example, Christians who dated the equinox to 21 March could celebrate Easter Sunday on 22 March if *luna* xiv fell on 21 March, while, in the same year, another group who used the same lunar calendar but dated the equinox to 25 March would have to wait for the next full moon on 19/20 April before they could celebrate Easter on the following Sunday, leaving more than a month's difference between the two reckonings.[19]

The stipulations for determining Easter, especially the second and third, allowed much room for debate and dissension when calculating the date in any given year. Contention over the date of the vernal equinox and the lunar limits would apply even if one could wait until the full moon was visible to identify the relevant *luna* xiv for Easter Sunday. However, the *luna* xiv that determines Easter Sunday must be calculated in advance as other elements of the Church's liturgical calendar, such as the beginning of Lent, depend on the date of Easter. To do so requires reconciling the solar and lunar calendars, which are independent entities and difficult to harmonise. At the time, a lunar month was believed to be 29-and-a-half days and the solar year 365-and-a-quarter days.[20] To account for the fact that these are not whole numbers, a regular solar year is 365 days and every fourth year an extra day, the *bissextus* or leap-day, is added to keep the calendar in line with the sun. Similarly, a **lunar year** is 354 days, that is 12 months of 29.5 days, or, in practical terms, six months of 29 days (known as **hollow months**) and six months of 30 days (**full months**); the lunar year is therefore 11 days shorter than a regular solar year and 12 days shorter than a bissextile or leap year.

To correlate the solar and lunar calendars, extra days known as **epacts** were added to the age of the moon. This means if *luna* i fell on the 1 January in a non-leap year, in the following year the moon would be *luna* xii on the 1 January due to the addition of 11 days. When the moon's age exceeded 30, an extra 30-day lunar month was added to the lunar year, known as an embolism. Such years are called **embolismic years**, while years of 12 lunar months are **common lunar years**. Approximately every third year was embolismic, but in time, this led to an over-correction so in certain prescribed years of a **luni-solar cycle** the moon skipped a day, known as the *saltus lunae*, the 'leap of the moon', to bring the solar and lunar calendars back into line.[21] The frequency of the *saltus* depended on the luni-solar cycle used, as various forms were available in the early Middle Ages, including 12-, 14- and 19-year cycles. Mathematically the **19-year**, or **Metonic cycle**, is the most accurate as 19 solar years are almost exactly 235 lunar months. The Metonic cycle is named after the Athenian astronomer, Metos, from

the fifth century BC.[22] In discussions of rival Easter reckonings, the 19-year cycle is sometimes given an angelic origin while others credit its adoption to the Synod of Nicaea; though erroneous, this idea may have arisen as early as the fourth century.[23] Easter tables were structured on luni-solar cycles, the type of cycle and the number of such cycles in a given table varied depending on the compiler's choices: for example, there are Easter tables of 84-, 95-, 112- and 532-year duration, to name but some.[24]

The range of factors outlined herein allowed for considerable variation in the date of Easter Sunday when different reckonings came into conflict: Leofranc Holford-Strevens has demonstrated that this was the case in the Northumbrian court of Oswiu and Eanflæd prior to the Synod of Whitby.[25] The luni-solar cycles underpinning different Easter tables began in different years so had no base year in common, and the *saltus* could be placed at different times in the year. In addition, lunar calendars varied because their embolismic and common years would not have been in sequence; there were differences about when in the year to introduce embolisms; and the sequence of 29- and 30-day lunar months differed.[26] All of these factors led to significant difficulties in reconciling Easter reckonings which concerned Christians for centuries. The controversy was particularly pronounced on several occasions, especially during the pontificate of Leo the Great (r. 440–61), and led to Leo's archdeacon and successor as pope, Hilarus (r. 461–8), commissioning a new Easter table in an effort to resolve the problem.[27] This was the table of Victorius of Aquitaine, created in 457, which addressed some problems while introducing others, as we shall see. Victorius's table came to be seen as the authoritative Roman reckoning because of its association with Hilarus and was one of the key texts in the Insular Easter Controversy.

The expansion of Christianity to Ireland and Britain brought a range of Easter reckonings to these islands, but three were of particular importance, that of Victorius of Aquitaine, an 84-year reckoning, and the 95-year table of Dionysius Exiguus (c. AD 470 – c. 544).

84-year cycle *– the* latercus: The oldest of these was the 84-year cycle, known as the ***latercus***, which was created in Francia in the early fifth century.[28] It is now predominantly associated with the Irish and British and was followed by the community on Iona, the small island monastery established by Irish monks off the west coast of Scotland, until 716. Its precise structure had puzzled scholars for centuries until Dáibhí Ó Cróinín discovered an authentic 84-year table in Padua in the 1980s, and his and Daniel Mc Carthy's subsequent analysis of this table gave a major boost to knowledge and understanding of Insular computistics.[29] The *latercus* was an 84-year table based on a 14-year *saltus* that used lunar limits of xiv–xx, the old Roman date of 25 March for the vernal equinox, and had an unusual lunar calendar: rather than alternating between 29- and 30-day lunar months, as was the case in the Roman lunar year, March was hollow, and the sequence goes 30, 29, 29, 29, 30, 29, 30, 30, 29, 30, 29, 30.[30] Although based on a 14-year *saltus*, the 84-year table is structured on three 28-year **solar cycles**, as this is the length of time it takes for the days of the week and dates of the months to repeat exactly in sequence: the four-year leap cycle times the seven-day week (4 x 7 = 28).

Victorius of Aquitaine: The next table is the **532-year Easter cycle** by Victorius of Aquitaine, from 457.[31] Victorius followed Alexandrian mathematics and used the 19-year luni-solar cycle to underpin his calculations. He also took account of the leap-year cycle, as after 532 years the solar and lunar data and the days of the week all repeat in sequence.[32] Although Victorius's 19-year cycle was Alexandrian, he preserved elements of the old Roman reckonings, such as using lunar limits of xvi–xxii, rather than the Alexandrian xv–xxi. Easter dates from the 21 to 24 April were also problematic, as the Easter solemnities would clash with the traditional feast of the foundation of Rome on 21 April.[33] To avoid these discrepancies, Victorius occasionally offered double dates for Easter in some years and left it to the Church authorities to decide which was appropriate. In addition, in certain years, to celebrate Easter before the 21 April required treating the full moon before the vernal equinox as the paschal *luna* xiv. Victorius numbered the years of his Easter cycle by counting from the Passion (*Annus Passionis*: AP) and using consular years, both of which he received from the chronicle by Prosper of Aquitaine.[34]

Dionysius Exiguus: The 95-year Easter table of Dionysius Exiguus was also based on Alexandrian methods: whereas Victorius created a new Easter table, a skill that appears to have been lost in the western Church after the fifth century, Dionysius translated and extended an existing Greek table.[35] Dionysius compiled his table in 525 and it ran from 532–626 inclusive.[36] It consisted of five cycles of 19 years and used lunar limits of xv–xxi. The Dionysian table used in the Insular Church was an extension to the original table created by Felix Gillitanus in 616 of another five 19-year cycles running from 627–721 inclusive.[37] Although both Victorius and Dionysius used the Alexandrian 19-year cycle, their cycles were not synchronised and Victorius added the *saltus* at a different point in the cycle.[38] Dionysius also included *Argumenta*, or rules, derived from Alexandrian science, which explain his calculations, and his letter to Petronius outlined that the bissextile years would need to be recalculated when extending the table.[39] He used Incarnation dating (AD) and the 15-year indiction cycle to count the years in his Easter table. The indiction was a 15-year taxation cycle that was introduced in the Roman world in the early fourth century and was popular for much of the Middle Ages. It was useful for dating events in the short term, but it needed to be combined with another chronological system, such as AD or more frequently imperial years, when used for longer term purposes.[40]

These three Easter reckonings were used in the Insular Church in the seventh century. The arrival of the **Victorian** and **Dionysian Easters** challenged the hegemony of the *latercus*; however, the Irish, in particular, exhibited a certain self-confidence in matters of computus. This can be seen in the behaviour of Columbanus (d. 615), the missionary who precipitated an Easter Controversy in Francia in the 590s and wrote to Pope Gregory the Great (r. 590–604) to denounce the Victorian table and argue for the superiority of Irish methods.[41] Similarly, Bede recorded the interactions of the Roman missionaries in Kent with British and Irish clerics with whom they disagreed on the date of Easter: Augustine of Canterbury failed to come to a compromise with British bishops at the council at Augustine's

Oak (*HE* 2:2), and his successor, Laurence, wrote to the bishops and abbots of Ireland encouraging them to join in Catholic unity on the matter of Easter (*HE* 2:4). Bede also records that Pope Honorius (r. 625–38) wrote to the Irish about Easter (*HE* 2:19) and this seems to have prompted extensive debate about the date of Easter in Ireland. Cummian, a monk from the southern part of the island, wrote to the abbot of Iona, Ségéne, and a hermit called Beccán, in the northern part of Ireland, about the controversy c. 630.[42] Cummian related that a Synod was held at Mag Léne, the exact location of which is unknown, but agreement could not be reached and an Irish delegation was sent to Rome to resolve the question.[43] The delegation reported back that the rest of the world celebrated Easter at a different time to the Irish, and Cummian famously asked who was following the wrong doctrine, the Hebrews, Greeks, Latins and Egyptians who were united in their observance, or the insignificant Irish and Britons almost at the end of the earth, and 'but pimples on the face of the earth'.[44] Cummian provided evidence for Irish knowledge of computes as he reviewed ten discussions of Easter, not all of which have been satisfactorily identified but include the *latercus*, Victorius and Dionysius.[45] Following these debates and discussions, the southern Irish Churches accepted the Victorian reckoning while it was rejected by Iona and the churches in the northern regions of Ireland, who continued with the *latercus*.[46]

The matter did not end there, of course. Bede records that Pope-elect John (r. 640–2) also wrote to the Irish about their error in calculating Easter in which he connected the Irish Easter with the Pelagian heresy (*HE* 2:19), an association that we will return to.[47] The debate about Easter moved to Northumbria following the Ionan mission during the reign of Oswald (r. 634–42) and came to a head during his brother Oswiu's reign (642–70) at the Synod of Whitby in 664. The bishops of Lindisfarne were successively Irish missionaries from Iona who followed the *latercus*, while the remnants of the earlier Roman mission to Northumbria, originally led by Paulinus, and Oswiu's queen, Eanflæd, observed the Roman Easter. The question of correct ecclesiastical tonsure was also raised at Whitby, with supporters of the Roman/Petrine tonsure opposing the form of tonsure worn by the Ionan monks.[48] Oswiu accepted 'Roman' practise but Bede's account is rather opaque.[49] The 'Roman' reckoning followed by Eanfæd is unidentified and was most probably that of Victorius, which was followed in Rome when the Gregorian missionaries left for Britain. However, the principal advocate for the 'Roman' practise at Whitby was Wilfrid, later bishop of York (d. 709), and recently returned from Rome, where he appears to have learned the rules of the Dionysiac computus. It seems, therefore, that three Easter reckonings were under discussion at Whitby, two of which were described as 'Roman', the Victorian and the Dionysian. The ultimate victor was Dionysius's table, which was promoted by Wilfrid.[50] Bede's vagueness in the *HE* differs greatly from his works on time where he was an assertive proponent of the Dionysian reckoning and condemned Victorius's computus, while the *latercus* is only ever alluded to.[51]

The Easter Controversy in the Insular Church continued for several decades after Whitby. Adomnán (d. 704), the ninth abbot of Iona, accepted the Dionysian Easter in Northumbria following conversations with Bede's abbot, Ceolfrith

(d. 716) but was unable to persuade his community to dispense with the *latercus*. However, he was more successful in Ireland, as several of the northern churches followed his example (*HE* 5:15 and 21). These developments are contemporary with a dispute between the Victorian and Dionysian reckonings in late seventh-century Ireland, and many influential Insular computistical texts were composed during this period.[52] Iona finally accepted the Dionysian Easter in 716, following the instruction of the Anglo-Saxon pilgrim, Egbert (d. 729), who spent the remainder of his life on the island (*HE* 3:4; 5:9 and 22). Many of the events of the Insular Easter Controversy are contemporary with Bede's lifetime and provide an important backdrop to his works on computus and chronology, as will be further discussed in Chapter One.

A final consideration in this brief description of the Insular Easter Controversy is Bede's presentation of these events, especially in relation to contemporary sources, such as the *Life of Wilfrid*, written by Stephen in the decade or so after Wilfrid's death. Bede endeavoured to show continuities between the Roman and Ionan missions to Northumbria, and harmonised their respective contributions to the development of Northumbrian Christianity in both the *HE* and his earlier *Vita Cuthberti*.[53] Stephen, in contrast, argued for a clear break between the Gregorian missionaries and Wilfrid's heroics. The first bishop of the Northumbrians was the Roman missionary, Paulinus (d. 644), who went to the court of King Edwin (r. 616–33) in the entourage of Edwin's new bride, the Kentish princess, Æthelburg, in 625 (*HE* 2:9).[54] Bede recorded that after Edwin's death in battle, Paulinus returned to Kent with the queen and her children but his deacon, James, remained behind (*HE* 2:20). He noted that James continued to follow and to instruct others in the 'catholic' Easter and attended the Synod of Whitby over 30 years later (*HE* 3:25). A second key continuity figure for Bede was Eanflæd, Oswiu's wife and the daughter of Edwin and Æthelburg. She is introduced to the reader as the first Northumbrian to be baptised during Paulinus's mission (*HE* 2:9) and was brought to Kent after her father's death (*HE* 2:20). She returned to Northumbria for her marriage to Oswiu and, according to Bede, her party would have been shipwrecked but for the miraculous intervention of the Irish missionary bishop, Aidan (d. 651), which he presented as evidence of the Irishman's sanctity (*HE* 3:15). In continuing to practise her own Easter, Eanflæd, quite literally, brought the Easter Controversy home to her husband, King Oswiu (*HE* 3:25).

Stephen presents Northumbrian history very differently. Eanflæd is a key figure at the beginning of Wilfrid's ecclesiastical career, but she does not appear anywhere in his account of the Easter Controversy, which is much shorter than Bede's, and James the Deacon is never mentioned.[55] In outlining the events at the Council of Austerfield (702/3), Stephen's Wilfrid claimed that he was the first, after the Gregorian missionaries, 'to root out the poisonous weeds planted by the Scots' (i.e., the Irish).[56] Wilfrid also described followers of the *latercus*, whether Irish or Anglo-Saxon, as schismatics and Quartodecimans (c. 11). In Stephen's telling, Wilfrid singlehandedly saved the Northumbrians from the negative influence of the Irish and converted them to the true Easter (c. 47), in opposition to Bede's ensemble version (*HE* 3:25).[57]

Stephen's pejorative attitude to the Irish may have been more common than Bede's warmth in the early eighth century, as we shall see further in Chapter Three. He is certainly not alone in casting aspersions about the robustness of his rivals' faith. The language of heresy became quite commonplace in the Insular Easter Controversy, as various figures on different sides accused their rivals of heresy.[58] The label of Quartodecimanism was levelled against followers of the *latercus* because they kept Easter Sunday on *luna* xiv, although Bede explicitly defended the Irish from such accusations, noting that they always kept Easter on Sunday, so could not be Quartodecimans in the strict sense of that term (*HE* 3:4, 17).[59] More problematic were charges of Pelagianism, such as those referred to in the letter from Pope-elect John (*HE* 2:19). A similar accusation is in Ceolfrith's letter to the Pictish king, Nechtan, c. 710, on the correct dating of Easter (*HE* 5:21). The substance of Ceolfrith's charge is that celebrating Easter with a full moon before the equinox is tantamount to agreeing with those who believe they can be saved without the grace of Christ, that is, the Pelagians. This applied to the Victorian Easter in certain years of his 19-year cycle, when Victorius offered a paschal full moon before the equinox to avoid Easter clashing with the feast of the foundation of Rome on 21 April. Bede heavily criticised Victorius for this decision in *De temporum ratione*.[60] However, it is not true for followers of the *latercus*, as they kept the older date of 25 March for the equinox and, although they celebrated Easter Sunday on *luna* xiv, their paschal full moon always followed the equinox.[61] Both Pope-elect John and Ceolfrith appear to have made the same error regarding the *latercus* practise.[62]

Bede defended the Irish several times throughout the *HE*.[63] He acknowledged that the southern Irish followed the canonical Easter long before the Ionan mission to Northumbria (*HE* 3:3) and variously tried to explain the Irish practise by suggesting they believed they were following Anatolius (*HE* 3:3), which is true;[64] or, that they were so far away, they were unaware of decrees about the date of Easter (*HE* 3:4). In addition, he defended Aidan by suggesting he was loyal to his elders (*HE* 3:25) or either ignorant of the true Easter or compelled by the force of public opinion not to accept it (*HE* 3:17). He also insisted that Aidan's faith was fully orthodox (*HE* 3:17), as will be discussed in Chapter Five. Bede also eagerly praised the Irish contribution to Northumbria and stressed the asceticism of the Irish monks of Lindisfarne at every opportunity, even highlighting their saintly behaviour in the chapter immediately following his account of the Synod of Whitby, in an apparent contrast with the behaviour of churchmen in Northumbria in Bede's own day (*HE* 3:26).[65] However, his defence of the Irish is inconsistent with his over-simplification of the Easter Controversy in the *HE*. He reduced it to a dispute between so-called 'Irish' and 'Roman' practises, though the 'Irish' practise is only followed by some of the Irish and the British who persisted with the *latercus* until 768.[66] Furthermore, there were two opposing 'Roman' reckonings, those of Victorius and Dionysius. Stephen's *Life of Wilfrid* similarly presents the debate at Whitby as a binary choice. Bede was far more concerned about the Victorian reckoning, which he explicitly attacked, in *De temporum ratione*. It is possible that Victorian Easter tables were still in use in Northumbria when

Bede was writing the *HE*, while the *latercus* was by then a historical curiosity for his contemporary readers, and he was required to tread carefully.[67] Whatever his reasons, it is clear that debate about the date of Easter was a feature throughout Bede's lifetime and provides an important context for all of his work on time.

Bede and time: Historiography and outline of the book

This book for the first time brings together Bede's works of exegesis, computus and history to fully examine his theology of time. Monastic schools taught their students scriptural exegesis and computus, though not all were as highly skilled as Bede, who became so renowned as a scholar that the scriptorium at his monastery of Wearmouth-Jarrow struggled to keep up with demand for his works in the years immediately after his death.[68] Despite the breadth of medieval monastic education, modern scholarship has tended to separate Bede's scholarship into different strands with his writings on computus frequently treated separately from his other works. This has introduced a false separation that has significant implications for understanding Bede's thought on time. This has also been exacerbated by recent historiographical developments whereby analysis of Bede's exegesis and history has revealed greater originality than had hitherto been realised, while scholars of computus have shown Bede's work to be less original than was previously thought.

Since the 1970s, developments in Bedan studies have highlighted his innovations rather than dependence on the Church Fathers, and his critical approach to his sources: for example, in examinations of his treatment of certain topics, such as Solomon's Temple in the Old Testament.[69] These approaches also reveal a closer affinity between his exegetical and historical works than had hitherto been recognised, which has illuminated our understanding of his aims and attentions in the *Historia ecclesiastica*.[70] Alongside these developments, greater efforts have been made to situate Bede, and especially his *HE*, in a political context, which challenge the image of Bede as a neutral or somewhat removed chronicler of his people's history.[71] Along with reappraising Bede's working methods and outputs, Bede's sense of himself has also been revised. Several contributors to the 2006 collection, *Innovation and Tradition in the Writings of the Venerable Bede*, edited by Scott DeGregorio, have suggested that Bede regarded himself – and sometimes presented himself – as a Father of the Church, a far cry from the humble scholar of earlier generations.[72] Peter Darby has built on these developments to argue that Bede was a commanding authority and the dominant intellectual figure of his time.[73] Bede, the exegete and historian, has therefore become a much more complex and compelling figure.

In contrast, scholars of computus have arrived at somewhat different conclusions about Bede the computist. Rather than emphasising his originality, Bede's computistical works have come to be seen as derivative. Charles Jones, many years ago, identified the influence of an Irish collection of texts, nowadays known as the *Sirmond computus*, on Bede's computus.[74] Dáibhí Ó Cróinín has subsequently expanded our knowledge of Bede's Irish computus sources, and Immo

Warntjes has contextualised his work in relation to the wider tradition of Insular computistics and contemporary developments in Francia, a task that is further assisted by Arno Borst's three-volume *Schriften zur Komputistik im Frankenreich von 721 bis 818*.[75] Consequently, elements of Bede's computus have been shown to have parallels in contemporary Irish and Frankish texts.[76]

In this book I argue that examining Bede's writing in the genres of computus, exegesis and history together offers a comprehensive understanding of his thought on time, rather than looking at these elements in isolation. Doing so also highlights the underlying coherency and consistency in his thought, as time reckoning and chronology were major themes in all elements of his oeuvre. In both of Bede's works of computus, *De temporibus* and *De temporum ratione*, he advocated the Easter reckoning of Dionysius Exiguus and included chronicles of world history, and *De temporum ratione* concludes with a comprehensive discussion of eschatology.[77] A concern with the correct calculation of Easter is a substantial theme in the narrative of the *HE*, and Bede introduced a further chronological influence from the Dionysian Easter table by adopting its *Anno Domini*-dating as the work's overarching chronology. His AD-dating, which is intended to remind the reader of divine intervention in human history, is illuminated by discussions of the Incarnation and Christology in his exegesis.[78] Bede's concern with chronological questions concerning the age of the world and the regnal years of Old Testament kings is evident in his commentaries on Scripture.[79] It is in reading across Bede's exegesis, computus and histories, too rarely considered together in modern scholarship, that his capacity to innovate within tradition most comes to the fore.

This book follows a thematic and chronological structure to investigate Bede and time: thematic in that each chapter focuses on a different aspect of Bede's thought, and chronological as the book begins with *De temporibus* and moves forward in time to conclude with the *Historia ecclesiastica*. This allows us to chart developments over the course of Bede's career and identify key consistencies across his corpus of writings. Chapters One to Three concern Bede's *De temporibus*, which, despite being his first work on time, is much neglected in scholarship on this topic because it was so effectively superseded by Bede's *De temporum ratione*. This book attempts to redress this imbalance, as so many of Bede's important chronological innovations and insights were introduced in *De temporibus* and later re-incorporated in *De temporum ratione* with little modification. Chapter One contextualises *De temporibus* in relation to computistical developments in the seventh and early eighth centuries in the Insular World and places Bede firmly within this tradition. Chapter Two examines Bede's first world chronicle (*DT* 16–22), which is especially maligned in modern scholarship due to its perceived limitations and argues for the innovative nature of its presentation. The chronicle takes the place of a theoretical discussion of the largest divisions of time – generations and ages – which were outlined in *DT* 1, and in this Bede differed from contemporary computistical textbooks. Chapter Three analyses Bede's Vulgate *Anno Mundi* chronology in relation to the world chronicle tradition from Late Antiquity to the early Middle Ages. It argues that

this dynamic period of chronological activity provides an important backdrop to Bede's chronicles, and offers a new theological interpretation of his chronological choice.

Chapter Four compares Bede's treatment of time in his first and second world chronicles, *DT* 16–22 and *DTR* 66. It examines how his knowledge of historical events improved over his career due to the increasing range of sources at his disposal, which allowed for an expanded treatment of certain topics, such as the papacy and the history of Britain. However, it also argues that Bede's willingness to use exegesis to explain chronological inconsistencies in scripture was already apparent in 703. Chapter Five examines the evolving importance of the Incarnation in Bede's exegesis. Bede emphasised the beginning of Christ's life in his chronicles and the *Historia ecclesiastica*, and this chapter identifies development in his engagement with the concepts of Nativity and Incarnation over the course of his career. It argues that this further demonstrates Bede's awareness of wider intellectual traditions, including the Christological controversies which concerned Church authorities from the fourth to seventh centuries. Chapter Six contextualises Bede's use of AD-dating in relation to contemporary developments in Anglo-Saxon England and Francia following dissemination of the Dionysian Easter table and considers the complications and implications of creating a linear chronology of early British history inspired by a theology of time.

This book offers a new assessment of Bede's thought on time by taking an intertextual approach to his surviving corpus of writings. It is only in bringing together exegesis, computus and history to illuminate Bede's contributions to chronology that the important theological concerns at the heart of his understanding of time can be properly revealed. In this way, we can see Bede's originality as a theological computist and assess his true place in the development of early medieval chronography.

Notes

1 *Quid est ergo tempus? Si nemo ex me quaerat, scio; si quaerenti explicare uelim, nescio*: Augustine, *Confessionum libri tredecim*, 11.14, lines 8–9, ed. L. Verheijen, *CCSL* 27 (Turnhout 1981) p. 202.

2 *Tempus, quid est? Tempus est spatium tendens de principio usque in finem*: Munich Computus 1, ed. and tr. I. Warntjes, *The Munich Computus: Text and Translation, Irish Computistics Between Isidore of Seville and the Venerable Bede and Its Reception in Carolingian Times* (Stuttgart 2010) pp. 2–3.

3 The work now known as the *Munich Computus* (Clm 14456, fols 8r–46r) was composed in an Irish region in c. 719, and the only known copy to have survived was made in St Emmeran in Regensburg in the first two decades of the ninth century. The manuscript was transferred to the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich in the early nineteenth century, from where it received its modern name; see Warntjes, *Munich Computus*, pp. LXXVII–CVI.

4 See the scriptural support for such a view in Is 60:19–20; Rev 21:23; 22:5; cf. Bede, *Expositio Apocalypseos*, bk 3.37, ed. R. Gryson, *CCSL* 121A (Turnhout 2001) p. 567.

5 *De natura rerum*, ed. C.W. Jones, *CCSL* 123A (Turnhout 1975) pp. 173–234 at 189; tr. C. Kendall and F. Wallis, *Bede: On the Nature of Things and On Times* (Liverpool 2010) pp. 71–103 at 71. *De temporibus* [*DT*], ed. C.W. Jones, *CCSL* 123C (Turnhout 1980) pp. 585–611. The poem is quoted in full and its relationship to both texts is discussed in Chapter One.

6 *De temporum ratione* [*DTR*], 71, lines 91–93, ed. T. Mommsen in C.W. Jones, *CCSL* 123 B (Turnhout 1977) p. 544; tr. F. Wallis, *Bede: The Reckoning of Time* (Liverpool 1999) p. 249.

7 See, e.g., Banquet: Isaiah 25:6; Matt 8:11–12; Luke 14:15–20; Rev 7:16–17. Wedding feast: Matt 22:2–6; Matt 25:1–10; Rev 19:7–9.

8 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini*, 3:5 and 3:18, ed. F. Winkelman and tr. M.J. Rondeau, *Eusèbe de Césarée, Vie De Constantin*, *SC* 559 (Paris 2013) pp. 356–57 and 374–77; *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People* [*HE*], bk 3, c. 25, ed. and tr. B. Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors (Oxford 1969, repr. 2001) p. 296. Cf. the reputed behaviour of the Irish priest Dagan, *HE* 2:4, and see Aldhelm, *Ep. IV, ad Geruntio*, ed. R. Ehwald, *MGH Auctores antiquissimi*, 15 (Berlin 1919) pp. 480–86 at 484.

9 See Bede's account of Egbert's final Easter in *HE* 5:22, ed. and tr. Colgrave and Mynors, p. 554. Cf. *DT* 15, ed. Jones, pp. 599–600; *DTR* 64, lines 14–20, ed. Jones, p. 456. See M. MacCarron, 'Christology and the future in Bede's *Annus Domini*,' in P. Darby and F. Wallis (eds.), *Bede and the Future* (Farnham 2014) pp. 161–79 at 177–78; Jennifer O'Reilly, *St Paul and the Sign of Jonah: Theology and Scripture in Bede's Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*, Jarrow Lecture 2014, pp. 23–32.

10 One of the best introductions to the Easter Controversy remains Charles Jones, *Bedae Opera de Temporibus* [*BOT*] (Cambridge, MA 1943) pp. 6–122. See also T.J. Talley, *The Origins of the Liturgical Year* (Collegeville, MN 1991) pp. 1–77; and Warntjes, *Munich Computus*, pp. XXX–XLI.

11 See A.A. Mosshammer, *The Easter Computus and the Origins of the Christian Era* (Oxford 2008, repr. 2009) pp. 44–46.

12 See Mosshammer, *Easter Computus*, pp. 50–52, on the role of the Council of Nicaea of 325, which implicitly endorsed the rules for Easter, even if they did not publish such a rule, as was often thought later: e.g., Dionysius Exiguus, *Ep. Ad Petronium*, ed. B. Krusch, *Studien zur christlich-mittelalterlichen Chronologie: Die Entstehung unserer heutigen Zeitrechnung* (Berlin 1938) [hereafter *Studien* II] pp. 63–68 at 65.

13 See also Mosshammer, *Easter Computus*, pp. 46–48, on the Cappadocian practise of celebrating Easter on 25 March regardless of the day of the week or the age of the moon.

14 Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 4:14, ed. G. Bardy, *Eusèbe de Césarée, Histoire Ecclésiastique*, *SC* 31 (Paris 1952) pp. 179–80; and *Historia ecclesiastica*, 5:24, ed. G. Bardy, *Eusèbe de Césarée, Histoire Ecclésiastique*, *SC* 41 (Paris 1955) pp. 67–71. See Talley, *Origins of the Liturgical Year*, pp. 5–13.

15 Cf. Pope Victor's heavy-handed response to quartodecimans in the late second century with that of Pope Anicetus, Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 5:24, ed. Bardy, pp. 69–71. Christians began breaking with Jewish traditions in the very early days of the Church, most notably with Paul and Peter's disagreement about the circumcision of Gentile converts at the Council of Jerusalem; see Acts 15 and Gal 2. See Glenn Olsen, 'Bede as historian: The evidence from his observations on the life of the first Christian community at Jerusalem,' *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 33.4 (1982) pp. 519–30.

16 See Cummian, *De Controversia Paschali*, lines 59–85, ed. M. Walsh and D. Ó Cróinín, *Cummian's Letter De Controversia Paschali and the De Ratione Conputandi* (Toronto 1988) pp. 56–96 at 64–68; Ceolfrith's letter to Nechtan, *HE* 5:21, ed. Colgrave and Mynors, pp. 540–42. See also M. Walsh and D. Ó Cróinín, 'Introduction' to *Cummian's Letter*, pp. 3–54 at 25–29. See later in this chapter for Cummian and Ceolfrith.

17 On the solar symbolism of the liturgical year, see Éamonn Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood: Liturgical Images and the Old English Poems of the Dream of the Rood Tradition* (London 2005) pp. 83–107; and Talley, *Origins of the Liturgical Year*.

18 See Mosshammer, *Easter Computus*, pp. 150–55. The Julian calendar advances on the solar year due to an accumulating inaccuracy relating to the insertion of bissextile days; this was addressed in the Gregorian calendar reforms of the sixteenth century; see C.P.E. Nothaft, *Scandalous Error: Calendar Reform and Calendrical Astronomy in Medieval Europe* (Oxford 2019).

19 Lunar months were either 29 or 30 days in length, leading to two possible dates for the next full moon depending on the lunar calendar used. See below for lunar calendars.

20 In reality, the lunar month (though year may be the more accurate astronomical term) is 29.53059 days on average and the solar year is 365.242189 days on average. These figures are averages because orbits are elliptical rather than circular due to the gravitational pull on the earth and the moon: N. Dershowitz and E.M. Reingold, *Calendrical Calculations* (Cambridge 2008) pp. 45–61, 187, 193.

21 For a full explanation of these principles, see D.P. Mc Carthy, 'Easter principles and a fifth-century lunar cycle used in the British Isles,' *Journal for the History of Astronomy* 24 (1993) pp. 204–24 at 206–10; and L. Holford-Strevens, 'Paschal lunar calendars up to Bede,' *Peritia* 20 (2008) pp. 165–208.

22 Dershowitz and Reingold, *Calendrical Calculations*, p. 7. See K. Harrison, 'Luni-solar cycles: Their accuracy and some types of usage,' in M.H. King and W.M. Stevens (eds.), *Saints, Scholars and Heroes*, Vol. 2 (Minnesota 1979) pp. 65–78.

23 On angelic origin, see *Epistola Cyrilli*, ed. B. Krusch (Leipzig 1880) pp. 344–49. On the Synod of Nicaea, see Ambrose of Milan, *Epistula extra collectionem* 13, ed. M. Zelzer, *CSEL* 82 (Vienna 1982) pp. 222–34; Dionysius Exiguus, *Ep. Ad Petronium*, ed. Krusch, *Studien* II, pp. 63–68 at 63. The authenticity of Ambrose's letter was disputed but has recently received support, see K. Harrison, 'Episodes in the history of Easter cycles in Ireland,' in D. Whitelock, R. McKitterick and D. Dumville (eds.), *Ireland in Early Mediaeval Europe* (Cambridge 1982) pp. 307–19; M. Lejbowicz, 'Les Pâques Baptismales d'Augustin d'Hippone, une étape contournée dans l'unification des pratiques computistes latines,' in I. Warntjes and D. Ó Cróinín (eds.), *Computus and Its Cultural Context in the Latin West, AD 300–1200* (Turnhout 2010) pp. 1–39; and L. Holford Strevens, 'Church politics and the Computus: From Milan to the ends of the earth,' in I. Warntjes and D. Ó Cróinín (eds.), *The Easter Controversy of Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages: Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on the Science of Computus in Ireland and Europe* (Turnhout 2011) pp. 1–20. See also B. Krusch, 'Die Einführung des griechischen Paschalritus im Abendlande,' *Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde* 9 (1884) pp. 99–169 at 106–7; C.W. Jones, 'A legend of St Pachomius,' *Speculum* 18 (1943) pp. 198–210. Aldhelm believed that the 19-year cycle was instituted by the Synod of Nicaea, *Ep. IV, ad Geruntio*, ed. Ehwald, p. 483; Bede asserted the same in *DT* 11, but credited it to Eusebius in *DTR* 44.

24 On the development of Easter tables, see Jones, *BOT*, pp. 6–77 and Mosshammer, *Easter Computus*, pp. 109–244. On the difference between 84-year tables that use 12-year *saltus* compared to 14-year *saltus*, see Mosshammer, *Easter Computus*, pp. 205–24; and Immo Warntjes, 'The Munich Computus and the 84 (14)-year Easter reckoning,' *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 107C (2007) pp. 31–85.

25 See L. Holford-Strevens, *The History of Time: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford 2005) pp. 52–53; and 'Marital discord in Northumbria: Lent and Easter, his and hers,' in I. Warntjes and D. Ó Cróinín (eds.), *Computus and Its Cultural Context in the Latin West, AD 300–1200* (Turnhout 2010), pp. 143–58.

26 See Mc Carthy, 'Easter principles and a fifth-century lunar cycle,' pp. 206–21; Holford-Strevens, *History of Time*, pp. 54–56; Holford-Strevens, 'Paschal lunar calendars'; Warntjes, 'The Munich Computus,' pp. 41–43.

27 See the collection of essays edited by Immo Warntjes and Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, *Easter Controversy*.

28 On the origin of this table, see D.P. Mc Carthy, 'The origin of the *latercus* paschal cycle of the Insular Celtic churches,' *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 28 (1994) pp. 25–49.

29 D. Ó Cróinín and D.P. Mc Carthy, 'The "lost" Irish 84-year Easter table rediscovered,' *Peritia* 6–7 (1987–88) pp. 227–42, repr. in D. Ó Cróinín, *Early Irish History and Chronology* (Dublin 2003) pp. 58–75; and Mc Carthy, 'Easter principles and a fifth-century lunar cycle'.

30 See Mc Carthy, 'Easter principles and a fifth-century lunar cycle,' p. 211; Warntjes, 'The Munich Computus,' pp. 41–43.

31 Victorius of Aquitaine, *Cyclus Paschali*, ed. B. Krusch, *Studien* II (Berlin 1938) pp. 27–52. See Mosshammer, *Easter Computus*, pp. 239–44.

32 Victorius appears not to have known the 28-year solar cycle (28x19=532), rather, he worked with four units of 133 years. See Walsh and Ó Cróinín, *Cummian's Letter*, note to line 225, p. 88, and 'Introduction,' p. 42; however, Mosshammer disagrees, *Easter Computus*, pp. 240–41. In the Julian calendar the Easter cycle repeats after 532 years; however, in the more mathematically complex Gregorian calendar it takes 5.7 million years before the solar and lunar data and the days of the week all repeat exactly in sequence: Dershowitz and Reingold, *Calendrical Calculations*, pp. 116–17.

33 See Holford-Strevens, 'Church politics and the Computus,' pp. 1–12.

34 Prosper of Aquitaine, *Epitoma Chronicon*, ed. T. Mommsen, *MGH Auctores antiquissimi*, 9, *Chronica Minora*, 1 (Munich 1981) 385–485; see Chapter Three for discussion of chronological choices in Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages.

35 Victorius' abilities as a computist have been denigrated since at least the sixth century, see Mosshammer, *Easter Computus*, pp. 243–44, and further in this chapter. However, Philipp Nothaft and Immo Warntjes have recently defended Victorius' mathematical abilities, see Nothaft, 'Review of Mary Kelly and C. Doherty (eds.), *Music and the Stars: Mathematics in Medieval Ireland* (Dublin 2013),' *Peritia* 24–25 (2013–14) pp. 348–54 at 350; and Warntjes, 'Review of Kendall and Wallis (trs.), *Bede: On the Nature of Things*,' *The Medieval Review* 12.08.01 (https://scholarworks.iu.edu/journals/index.php/tmr/article/view/17613). The problems with Victorius' table stem primarily from his unsuccessful attempts to reconcile competing Roman and Alexandrian traditions.

36 Dionysius Exiguus, *Cyclus*, ed. B. Krusch, *Studien* II (Berlin 1938) pp. 69–74. See Mosshammer, *Easter Computus*, pp. 59–106.

37 Felix's preface to his Easter table is in Krusch, *Studien* II, pp. 86–87. On the identity of Felix, see Krusch, 'Die Einführung des griechischen Paschalritus im Abendlande,' pp. 114–15; and L. Cuppo, 'Felix of Squillace and the Dionysiac Computus I: Bobbio and Northern Italy (MS Ambrosiana H150),' in I. Warntjes and D. Ó Cróinín (eds.), *Easter Controversy of Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages: Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on the Science of Computus in Ireland and Europe* (Turnhout 2011), pp. 110–36 at 114–16.

38 See C.W. Jones, 'The Victorian and Dionysiac Paschal Tables in the West,' *Speculum* 9.4 (1934) pp. 408–21.

39 Dionysius Exiguus, *Argumenta*, ed. Krusch, *Studien* II, pp. 75–81, and *Ep. Ad Petronium*, ed. Krusch. See Mosshammer, *Easter Computus*, pp. 97–106; and Immo Warntjes, 'The *Argumenta* of Dionysius Exiguus and their early recensions,' in I. Warntjes and D. Ó Cróinín (eds.), *Computus and Its Cultural Context in the Latin West, AD 300–1200: Proceedings of the 1st International Conference on the Science of Computus in Ireland and Europe* (Turnhout 2010) pp. 40–111.

40 See Chapter Six for the development and adoption of Incarnation dating.

41 Columbanus, *Epistola I*, ed. G.S.M. Walker (Dublin 1979) pp. 3–13. See S.C. McCluskey, 'Astronomies in the Latin West from the fifth to the ninth centuries,' in P.L. Butzer and D. Lohrmann (eds.), *Science in Western and Eastern Civilization in Carolingian Times* (Basel 1993) pp. 139–60.

42 On the identity of Cummian and his recipients, see Walsh and Ó Cróinín, *Cummian's Letter*, pp. 7–15; and M. Walsh, 'Cummian's letter: Science and heresy in seventh-century Ireland,' in M. Kelly and C. Doherty (eds.), *Music and the Stars: Mathematics in Medieval Ireland* (Dublin 2013) pp. 99–110 at 99–100.

43 Cummian, *De Controversia Paschali*, lines 259–80, ed. Walsh and Ó Cróinín, pp. 90–92. Walsh and Ó Cróinín suggest Mag Léne was most likely in the south-central area of Ireland, note to line 264, p. 91.

44 Cummian, *De Controversia Paschali*, lines 107–10, ed. Walsh and Ó Cróinín, p. 72: *Et hoc uereor; sed uos considerate quae sunt conuenticula quae dixi: utrum Haebrei et Greci et Latini et Aegiptii, simul in obseruatione precipuarum solennitatum uniti, an Britonum Scottorumque particula, qui sunt pene extremi et, ut ita dicam, mentagrae orbis terrarum.* Cummian's arguments about particularism are reflected in Bede's summary of Pope Honorius' letter to the Irish, *HE* 2:19, and his account of the Synod of Whitby, *HE* 3:25, ed. Colgrave and Mynors, pp. 198 and 300.

45 Cummian, *De Controversia Paschali*, lines 204–20, ed. Walsh and Ó Cróinín, pp. 82–86. See Walsh and Ó Cróinín, 'Introduction,' pp. 29–47; D.P. Mc Carthy, 'The paschal cycle of St Patrick,' in I. Warntjes and D. Ó Cróinín (eds.), *Late Antique Calendrical Thought and Its Reception in the Early Middle Ages* (Turnhout 2017) pp. 94–137.

46 Cummian, *De Controversia Paschali*, lines 281–85, ed. Walsh and Ó Cróinín, p. 94.

47 See K. Harrison, 'A letter from Rome to the Irish clergy, AD 640,' *Peritia* 3 (1984) 222–29; and D. Ó Cróinín, '"New Heresy for Old": Pelagianism in Ireland and the papal letter of 640,' *Speculum* 60.3 (1985) pp. 505–16, repr. in Ó Cróinín, *Early Irish History and Chronology*, pp. 87–98.

48 See Edward James, 'Bede and the tonsure question,' *Peritia* 3 (1984) pp. 85–98.

49 There was also a political dimension to the debate at Whitby as Oswiu's son and sub-king Alhfrith supported the 'Roman' reckoning (*HE* 3:25). For the political background, see e.g., Richard Abels, 'The Council of Whitby: A Study in Early Anglo-Saxon politics,' *Journal of British Studies* 23.1 (1983) pp. 1–25. However, note that discussions of the political dimension frequently underestimate the differences between Easter reckonings in this period.

50 See Holford-Strevens, 'Marital discord in Northumbria'; E.T. Dailey, 'To choose one Easter from three: Oswiu's decision and the Northumbrian Synod of AD 664,' *Peritia* 26 (2015) pp. 47–64. Masako Ohashi has argued that manuscript evidence from the *Life of Wilfrid* indicates both the *latercus* and the Victorian Easter were condemned at Whitby: 'The Easter table of victorius of Aquitaine in early medieval England,' in I. Warntjes and D. Ó Cróinín (eds.), *Easter Controversy of Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Turnhout 2011) pp. 137–49 at 144–47.

51 See *DTR* 6 and 51, ed. Jones, pp. 290–95 and 437–41, and further in Chapter One.

52 See Immo Warntjes, 'Victorius vs Dionysius: The Irish Easter controversy of AD 689,' in P. Moran and I. Warntjes (eds.), *Early Medieval Ireland and Europe: Chronology, Contacts, Scholarship: Festschrit for Dáibhí Ó Cróinín* (Turnhout 2015) pp. 33–97, and Chapter One.

53 Bede, *Vita Sancti Cuthberti*, ed. and tr. B. Colgrave in *Two Lives of Saint Cuthbert* (Cambridge 1940) pp. 142–307. See Alan Thacker, 'Lindisfarne and the origins of the cult of St Cuthbert,' in G. Bonner, D. Rollason and C. Stancliffe (eds.), *St Cuthbert, His Cult and Community to AD 1200* (Woodbridge 1989) pp. 103–22; Clare Stancliffe, *Bede, Wilfrid, and the Irish*, Jarrow Lecture 2003; and Jennifer O'Reilly, 'Islands and idols at the ends of the earth: Exegesis and conversion in Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*,' in S. Lebecq, M. Perrin and O. Szerwiniack (eds.), *Bède le vénérité: Entre tradition et posterité* (Lille 2005) pp. 119–45 at 142.

54 See Chapter Six for discussion of challenges to Bede's chronology in the *HE*. The *Life of Gregory the Great* from Whitby pays much attention to Paulinus but omits Æthelburg: *The Earliest Life of Gregory the Great, by an Anonymous Monk at Whitby*, ed. B.

Colgrave (Cambridge 1968); on the role of women in Bede's account of Anglo-Saxon conversion compared to their absence in other accounts, see M. MacCarron, 'Royal marriage and conversion in Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica gentis anglorum*,' *Journal of Theological Studies* 68.2 (2017) pp. 650–70.

55 Stephen, *Vita Wilfridi*, cc. 2 and 10, ed. B. Colgrave (Cambridge repr. 1985) pp. 6 and 20–22. On Stephen's account of Whitby, see David Pelteret, 'The issue of apostolic authority at the Synod of Whitby,' in Warntjes and Ó Cróinín, *Easter Controversy of Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, pp. 150–72.

56 Stephen, *Vita Wilfridi*, c. 47, ed. Colgrave, p. 98: *Necnon et ego primus post obitum primorum procerum, a sancto Gregorio directorum, Scotticae virulenta plantationis germina eradicarem.*

57 On Bede's relationship with Wilfrid and Stephen's *Life of Wilfrid*, see, e.g., Eric John, 'The social and political problems of the early English Church,' in J. Thirsk (ed.), *Land, Church and People: Essays Presented to Prof. H.P.R. Finberg* (*Agricultural History Review* 18, Supplement (Reading 1970) pp. 39–63; D.P. Kirby, 'Bede, Eddius Stephanus and the Life of Wilfrid,' *English Historical Review* 98 (1983) pp. 101–14; W. Goffart, 'Bede and the Ghost of Bishop Wilfrid,' in Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History (AD 550–800): Jordanes, Gregory of Tours, Bede and Paul the Deacon* (Princeton, NJ 1988) pp. 235–328, esp. 307–13; Stancliffe, *Bede, Wilfrid, and the Irish*. I am preparing a study of Wilfrid's role in Bede's *HE*.

58 See Caitlin Corning, *The Celtic and Roman Traditions: Conflict and Consensus in the Early Medieval Church* (New York, NY 2006) pp. 91–93 and 170–71.

59 Cf. Aldhelm, *Ep. IV, ad Geruntio*, ed. Ehwald, pp. 483–84. See Stancliffe, *Bede, Wilfrid, and the Irish*, esp. pp. 4–21.

60 See Bede, *DTR* 6 and 51, ed. Jones, pp. 290–95 and 437–41.

61 See Bede, *Epistola ad Wicthedum*, ed. Jones, *BOT*, pp. 317–25, on different dates for the equinox; and M. Ohashi, 'Theory and history: An interpretation of the Paschal Controversy in Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*,' in S. Lebecq, M. Perrin and O. Szerwiniack (eds.), *Bède Le Vénérable entre Tradition et Postérité* (Lille 2005), pp. 177–85 at 184–85.

62 See Ó Cróinín, 'New Heresy for Old'; Ohashi, 'Theory and history,' pp. 184–85; and M. Ohashi, 'The impact of the Paschal Controversy: Computus, Exegesis and church history in Early Britain and Ireland,' Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Nanzan University (1999) pp. 79–96.

63 On Bede and the Irish, see T.M. Charles-Edwards, 'Bede, the Irish and the Britons,' *Celtica* 15 (1983) pp. 42–52; Alan Thacker, 'Bede and the Irish,' in L.A.J.R. Houwen and A.A. MacDonald (eds.), *Beda Venerabilis: Historian, Monk and Northumbrian* (Groningen 1996) pp. 31–59; Stancliffe, *Bede, Wilfrid, and the Irish*; Sarah McCann, '*Plures de Scottorum regione*: Bede, Ireland, and the Irish,' *Eolas* 8 (2015) pp. 20–38.

64 Cf. Columbanus, *Ep.* 1.3 and *Ep.* 2.7, ed. Walker, pp. 2–4 and 18.

65 On Bede's view of the Church in his own day, see *Epistola ad Ecgbertum Episcopum*, ed. and tr. C. Grocock and I. Wood, *The Abbots of Wearmouth and Jarrow* (Oxford 2013) pp. 124–161. Bede and reform has become an important theme in Bedan studies, see e.g., A. Thacker, 'Bede's ideal of reform,' in P. Wormald, D. Bullough and R. Collins (eds.), *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society* (Oxford 1983) pp. 130–153; S. DeGregorio, ' "Nostrorum socordiam temporum": The reforming impulse of Bede's later exegesis,' *Early Medieval Europe* 11.2 (2002) pp. 107–22; S. DeGregorio, 'Bede's *In Ezram et Neemiam* and the Reform of the Northumbrian Church,' *Speculum* 79 (2004) pp. 1–25; and Joanna Story, 'Bede, Willibrord and the Letters of Pope Honorius I on the genesis of the archbishopric of York,' *EHR* 127.527 (2012) pp. 783–818 at 785 and 813–17.

66 Bede remarked on the Britons' obstinacy as he concluded the *HE* (5:23). See *Annales Cambriae*, 768, ed. and tr. J. Morris, *Nennius: British History and the Welsh Annals* (London 1980) p. 88.

67   The preface to the anonymous *Life of Cuthbert* includes substantial borrowings from Victorius' prologue, revealing the work was known in late seventh-/early eighth-century Lindisfarne: *Vita Sancti Cuthberti auctore anonymo*, ed. and tr. B. Colgrave in *Two Lives of Saint Cuthbert*, pp. 60–139 at 60–62. See also Ohashi, 'The Easter Table of Victorius of Aquitaine'.

68   See W. Stevens, 'A present sense of things past: *Quid est enim tempus?*' in G. Jaritz and G. Moreno-Riaño (eds.), *Time and Eternity: The Medieval Discourse* (Turnhout 2003) pp. 9–28 at 18. Bede received inquiries from his peers about complex scriptural questions, see e.g., his response to Bishop Acca, *De eo quod ait Isaias*, PL 94.702–10. Boniface, archbishop of Mainz (d. 754), wrote to Abbot Hwaetberht of Wearmouth-Jarrow and Archbishop Egbert of York asking for copies of Bede's works: *Epistolae* 76 and 91, ed. M. Tangl, *MGH Separatim Editae* 1 (Berlin 1916) pp. 158–59 and 206–8; see M. Parkes, *The Scriptorium of Wearmouth-Jarrow*, Jarrow Lecture 1982. For the manuscript transmission of Bede's works, see George Hardin Brown, *A Companion to Bede* (Woodbridge 2009) pp. 117–34; Michael Lapidge, 'Beda Venerabilis,' in P. Chiesa and L. Castaldi (eds.), *La trasmissione dei testi latini del medioevo* (Florence 2008) pp. 44–135; and J.A. Westgard, 'Bede and the continent in the Carolingian age and beyond,' in S. DeGregorio (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Bede* (Cambridge 2010) pp. 201–15.

69   The essay collection *Famulus Christi*, ed. G. Bonner (London 1976), was important in establishing these new trends in Bede studies, see esp. R. Ray, 'Bede, the Exegete, as Historian,' in G. Bonner (ed.), *Famulus Christi* (London 1976) pp. 125–40; and P. Meyvaert, 'Bede the scholar,' pp. 40–69. On the temple image, see J. O'Reilly, 'Introduction,' in S. Connolly (tr.), *Bede: On the Temple* (Liverpool 1995) pp. XVII–LV; and C. O'Brien, *Bede's Temple: An Image and Its Interpretation* (Oxford 2015).

70   See J. O'Reilly: 'Islands and Idols'; 'The multitude of Isles and the Corner-stone: Topography, exegesis, and the identity of the *Angli* in Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*,' in J. Roberts and L. Webster (eds.), *Anglo-Saxon Traces* (Tempe, AZ 2011) pp. 201–27; *St Paul and the Sign of Jonah*; all now collected in J. O'Reilly, *History, Hagiography and Biblical Exegesis: Essays on Bede, Adomnán and Thomas Becket*, ed. M. MacCarron and D. Scully (Oxford and New York 2019). See also Thacker, 'Bede's ideal of reform'; DeGregorio, 'Nostrorum socordiam temporum'; J. Barrow, 'How Coifi pierced Christ's side: A re-examination of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, II, chapter 13,' *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 62 (2011) pp. 693–706; M. MacCarron, 'The adornment of virgins: Æthelthryth and her necklaces,' in E. Mullins and D. Scully (eds.), *Listen, O Isles, Unto Me* (Cork 2011) pp. 142–55; MacCarron, 'Royal marriage and conversion'.

71   D.P. Kirby, 'King Ceolwulf of Northumbria and the *Historia Ecclesiastica*,' *Studia Celtica* 14-15 (1979–80) pp. 168–73; Kirby, 'Bede, Eddius Stephanus and the Life of Wilfrid'; Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History*; W. Goffart, 'The *Historia Ecclesiastica*: Bede's agenda and ours,' *The Haskins Society Journal: Studies in Medieval History* 2 (1990) pp. 29–45; D.P. Kirby, *Bede's Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum: Its Contemporary Setting*, Jarrow Lecture 1992, repr. in *Bede and His World, Vol. II, The Jarrow Lectures 1979–1993* (Aldershot 1994) pp. 903–26; N.J. Higham, *The Convert Kings: Power and Religious Affiliation in Early Anglo-Saxon England* (Manchester 1997); N.J. Higham, *(Re-)Reading Bede: The Ecclesiastical History in Context* (London 2006); V. Gunn, *Bede's Historiae: Genre, Rhetoric and the Construction of Anglo-Saxon Church History* (Woodbridge 2009).

72   S. DeGregorio (ed.), *Innovation and Tradition in the Writings of the Venerable Bede* (Morgantown 2006): esp. DeGregorio, 'Introduction: The new Bede,' pp. 1–10; R. Ray, 'Who did Bede think he was?' pp. 11–35; and A. Thacker, 'Bede and the ordering of understanding,' pp. 37–63.

73   P.N. Darby, *Bede and the End of Time* (Farnham 2012) p. 12.

74 C.W. Jones, 'The "lost" Sirmond manuscript of Bede's "Computus",' *EHR* 52 (1937), pp. 204–19, repr. with omission of the appendix in *Bede, the Schools and the Computus*, ed. W.M. Stevens (Aldershot 1994), article X; *idem*, *Bedae Opera de Temporibus*, pp. 105–13. See Chapter One for further discussion of the *Sirmond computus* and Bede.

75 D. Ó Cróinín, 'The Irish provenance of Bede's Computus,' *Peritia* 2 (1983) 229–47, repr. in *idem*., *Early Irish History and Chronology* (Dublin 2003) pp. 173–90; and *idem*, 'Bede's Irish Computus,' in Ó Cróinín, *Early Irish History and Chronology*, pp. 201–12. I. Warntjes, 'Introduction' and commentary to *Munich Computus*. A. Borst, *Schriften zur Komputistik im Frankenreich von 721 bis 818*, 1–3, *MGH Quellen Zur Geistesgeschichte Des Mittelalters* 21 (Hannover 2006).

76 E.g., cf. the tripartite division of time in *DT* 1 and *DTR* 2, with *De ratione conputandi* 6, ed. D. Ó Cróinín in Walsh and Ó Cróinín, *Cummian's Letter*, pp. 115–213; see further in Chapter One.

77 *DTR* 67–71, ed. Mommsen in Jones, pp. 535–44. On Bede's eschatology, see Darby, *Bede and the End of Time*.

78 E.g., *Homeliarum Evangelii, Libri II*, ed. D. Hurst, *CCSL* 122 (Turnhout 1955); see further in Chapter Five.

79 E.g., *In Primam Partem Samuhelis libri IIII*, ed. D. Hurst, *CCSL* 119 (II.2) (Turnhout 1962); see further in Chapter Four.

1 *De temporibus*

Bede's first foray into an explication of time was *De temporibus*, written in 703. It is one of his earliest surviving works and was written when he was about 30 years old, around the time he was ordained as a priest.[1] *De temporibus* is generally regarded as a companion to Bede's *De natura rerum*, which is believed to have been written around the same time.[2] Bede presented both works together in his autobiographical note listing his writings at the end of the *Historia ecclesiastica gentis anglorum*: 'Two books, one on the nature of things and the other on time-reckoning' (*De natura rerum, et de temporibus, libros singulos*).[3] *De natura rerum* (in 51 chapters) explains the workings of Creation and the earth's place in the zodiac following the model of classical cosmographies transmitted to Bede through the *De natura rerum* of Isidore of Seville (c. 560–636), while *De temporibus* (in 22 chapters) is a computus manual, covering the different units of time, including the Easter cycle, and concluding with a short chronicle of world history (cc. 17–22). Bede advocated the Easter table of Dionysius Exiguus (c. 470 – c. 544). *De temporibus* and *De natura rerum* were subsequently superseded by Bede's *De temporum ratione*, a much longer examination of time reckoning and nature, also in support of the Dionysian Easter reckoning, which was completed in 725 and written in response to requests from his students. Bede again paired the earlier works in his preface to his second treatment of time:

> *De natura rerum et ratione temporum duos quondam stricto sermone libellos discentibus ut rebar necessarios composui. Quos, cum fratribus quibusdam dare atque exponere coepissem, dicebant eos breuius multo digestos esse quam uellent, maxime ille de temporibus cuius propter rationem paschae potius uidebatur usus indigere; suadebantque mihi latius aliqua de temporum statu, cursu, ac fine disserere.*
>
> Some time ago I wrote two short books in a summary style which were, I judged, necessary for my students; these concerned the nature of things and the reckoning of time. When I undertook to present and explain them to some of my brethren, they said that they were much more concise than they would have wished, especially the book on time, which was, it seems, rather more in demand because of the calculation of Easter. So they persuaded me

to discuss certain matters concerning the nature, course and end of time at greater length.[4]

De temporum ratione also contained a chronicle of world history, in Chapter 66, which was followed by five chapters on eschatology (cc. 67–71); this discussion of the 'end of time at greater length' was a significant addition to *De temporibus*.[5] This chapter examines the contents of and context for *De temporibus*. It considers its transmission history, contextualises the work in relation to Insular *computistica* from the seventh and early eighth centuries and systematically compares Bede with his key sources, the *Etymologiae* of Isidore of Seville and Irish computus texts. Finally, it investigates why Bede wrote a textbook on time in 703.

Bede's first work on time has rarely been studied on its own merits, as it is usually subsumed into an examination of *De temporum ratione*, if any attention at all is paid to it. However, it is worthy of attention for three principal reasons: (1) Bede wrote *De temporibus* at a relatively early age, such that it can serve as a starting point for tracing developments in his thought over the course of his more than 30-year career, especially when compared with his later and more advanced works; (2) Bede's textbooks appear to have been written, at least primarily, for his students, which gives us an insight into the educational environment and curriculum of Wearmouth-Jarrow during his time and may be helpful for considering monastic schools more broadly in Northumbria; and (3) most importantly, the context for *De temporibus* is significantly different to that for *De temporum ratione* because *De temporibus* was produced when the date of Easter was still a damagingly divisive issue in Britain and Ireland.

The monastery of Iona, which was responsible for evangelising much of Northumbria and influenced – even dominated – the Northumbrian church in the middle decades of the seventh century, did not accept the Easter tables of Dionysius Exiguus until 716, 13 years after Bede wrote *De temporibus*. It is widely accepted that the Easter Controversy was one of Bede's major preoccupations, and several years after Iona conformed to the Dionysian Easter, he produced *De temporum ratione* and presented the 'conversion' of Iona as the climax of his *Historia ecclesiastica gentis anglorum* (5:22), which he completed in 731. Iona's opposition to the Dionysian Easter, and the community's continued support for the *latercus*, an 84-year Easter reckoning, was only one aspect of the Easter Controversy in the Insular World, however, as a contemporary debate ensued between proponents of the Easter tables of Dionysius and Victorius of Aquitaine who had produced his Easter cycle in 457.[6] This was clearly a live issue in Ireland up to the late seventh century, and possibly into the eighth century, and Irish computus texts in support of Victorius were known in Northumbria in Bede's time.[7] Bede's historical interest in the Easter Controversy, particularly in the *HE*, is often dismissed as his obsession,[8] but such a view overlooks the fact that this debate was a very real concern for much of Bede's adult life. *De temporibus* is one of only two Bedan texts directly concerned with time that were written while Iona persevered with the *latercus* reckoning – the other is the Letter to Plegwin[9] – and as such it is a witness to the Easter Controversy as a real, rather than historical, concern. It is

also one of several computus textbooks that were produced in the Insular World between the mid-seventh century and the first decades of the eighth century and is therefore important for understanding the development of computus in early medieval Ireland and Anglo-Saxon England.

Transmission and terminology of Bede's works on time

De temporum ratione was one of Bede's most influential and important works and, as a consequence, has received far more attention than his first work on time, in both manuscript transmission and Bedan scholarship.[10] Despite the importance of *De temporum ratione*, however, the manuscript evidence reveals that *De temporibus* remained popular over the centuries after its composition. Calvin Kendall and Faith Wallis, in their recent translation of *De temporibus*, have identified 112 manuscripts dating from the late eighth to fifteenth centuries containing all or part of this work.[11] In certain of these, the chronicle (beginning in either Chapter 16 or 17 and extending to Chapter 22) has been preserved on its own.[12] Compared to the manuscripts of *DTR*, which will be discussed later, the copies of *DT* appear to have been little used and were rarely glossed, leading to Charles Jones designating the work, 'the neglected child of the computists'.[13] This may have been so little used because it is such a succinct text and those who required more explanation, like Bede's students, turned to longer treatments of time reckoning.

The relationship between *De temporibus* and *De natura rerum* as companion pieces is reflected in the manuscript transmission. Although there are more identified manuscripts of *De natura rerum* – 143 dating from the late eighth to sixteenth centuries have been catalogued by Kendall and Wallis – these texts were frequently transmitted together.[14] Following Kendall and Wallis's catalogue, approximately 70 manuscripts contain all or parts of both *DNR* and *DT*, often presented adjacent to each other; this is over half of the surviving manuscripts of *DT*. The argument that *DT* and *DNR* were a combined enterprise is supported by the verse epigraph treated as the preface for *DNR* in all the printed editions of the text, and generally regarded as authentic.[15] The poem reads:

> *Naturas rerum uarias labentis et aeui*
> *Perstrinxi titulis, tempora lata citis,*
> *Beda Dei famulus. Tu fixa obsecro perennem*
> *Qui legis astra, super mente tuere diem*
>   In brief chapters, I, Bede, the servant of God,
> Have lightly touched on the varied natures of things
> And on the broad ages of fleeting time. You who study the stars above,
> Fix your mind's gaze, I pray, on the Light of the everlasting Day.[16]

This quatrain speaks to the content of both *DNR* and *DT*, particularly as there is little or no attention paid to 'fleeting time' in *DNR*. The argument that it was intended as a preface for both works is eminently plausible, particularly as *DT* otherwise lacks a preface, which is unusual in Bede's corpus.[17] The quatrain has

been preserved without *DNR* in only three manuscripts that were identified by Jones, and confirmed by Kendall and Wallis: Cambridge University Library, Ff. i. 27 (twelfth century); Dijon, Bibliothèque municipale 77, fol. 209v (twelfth century); Paris B.N. lat. 7361, fol. 42v (eleventh century). In Paris B.N. 7361 it accompanies only the chronicle from *DT*; and in Cambridge U.L. Ff. i. 27, it follows *DTR*, Chapters 66–71 (that is, the chronicle and eschatological chapters), and is succeeded by non-Bedan chronological material. These underline its suitability for works on time as well as on nature. Indeed, the imagery in the poem is, in many respects, just as suitable for *DTR* as for *DNR* and *DT*, and it speaks to the importance of these themes for Bede over the course of his career.

De temporum ratione is preserved in far more manuscripts than *DT* and *DNR*: Charles Jones listed 245 manuscripts dating from the eighth to seventeenth centuries in *CCSL* 123B, making it one of the most widely diffused of Bede's writings.[18] From very early in its transmission history the first 65 chapters on technical material were often separated from the Chronicle, which was either copied alone or with the chapters on eschatology that follow it, as in the Cambridge manuscript just cited.[19] This practise has continued into the modern period: Theodor Mommsen included an edition of Chapters 66–71 in his *MGH Chronica Minora* volumes, along with *DT* 17–22; Charles Jones later published Chapters 1–65 of *DTR* and Chapters 1–16 of *DT* in *BOT*; when Jones came to prepare his edition for *CCSL* he reproduced the technical chapters of both works from his *BOT* volume and Mommsen's editions of both chronicles and Chapters 67–71 of *DTR*.[20] As in the modern printed editions, *DTR* (either in full, or sections from it) was frequently preserved in manuscripts with the works it was written to supersede, especially, *DNR*. Following Kendall and Wallis's catalogue, *DTR* (or parts of it) can be found in approximately 74 of the manuscripts containing *DNR*, dating from the late eighth to fifteenth centuries, and 60 of the *DT* manuscripts, dating from the late eighth to fifteenth centuries.[21] This means that *DT* is accompanied by *DTR* in over half of the surviving identified manuscripts; indeed, of the 112 known manuscripts of *DT*, the work travels without either *DNR* or *DTR* on only 33 occasions.

Manuscripts of *DTR* multiplied extraordinarily rapidly, and Jones noted that the earliest were used so much that only fragments have survived of any that were copied before the last decade of the eighth century.[22] There is also a remarkable lack of variation in the early manuscript transmission of *DTR*: Faith Wallis described it as 'astoundingly stable'; and Charles Jones noted that there is far greater uniformity in the variant texts of *DTR* than the variant texts of *DT*, even when written by the same scribes.[23] Bede's *DTR* appears to have been venerated and protected by careful scribes to an extraordinary degree.[24]

De temporibus has clearly suffered in the shadow of its more esteemed younger sibling. Its neglect may also have been exacerbated by the fact that both works shared the same title for much of their existence. The modern titles of *De temporibus* and *De temporum ratione* have been in use since at least the nineteenth century, as the works appear under those designations in J.A. Giles, *The Complete Works of Venerable Bede*, volume 6; however, both works have been known by

both titles since they were first written. When Bede referred to *DT* in the preface to *DTR* he called it *De . . . ratione temporum*, which has ironically led to the second work being called by that title.[25] In his list of books recorded in *HE* 5:24, Bede referred to *DT* as *de temporibus* and *DTR* as *de temporibus librum unum maiorem*, indicating their close relationship. Giles acknowledged that *DTR* was sometimes known by that title, and Faith Wallis noted that *DTR* was known to medieval readers as *De temporibus* or *De temporibus liber secundus*.[26] The twelfth-century Cambridge University Library manuscript of *De temporibus* (Gg. II. 21), wrongly identified as containing only the chronicle, in contrast, calls this work *De temporibus minor*.[27] In the *Patrologia Latina* series, in which J.P. Migne reprinted the text of Giles and the seventeenth-century edition of Hervagius, they are described as *De temporibus liber* and *De temporum ratione*.[28] The standard modern titles were, therefore, not commonly used before the end of the nineteenth century; these titles were recorded in Laistner and King's *Hand-list of Bede manuscripts*, from 1943.[29] Both works also received greater prominence following the publication, in the same year, of Charles Jones's editions in *BOT*. *DTR* has traditionally been of greater interest but *De temporibus* holds an important place in the history of computistics in early medieval Ireland and Anglo-Saxon England.

Insular computistica

The strength and depth of Irish *computistica* is important when examining the development of this discipline in Anglo-Saxon England, especially for the writings of Bede, the most important Anglo-Saxon computist of his time. In the first half of the twentieth century, Charles Jones effectively contextualised Bede's works on time and demonstrated his debt to Irish computistical tradition.[30] The genre of computus has received considerably more attention in recent years, particularly as it was understood in the Insular World, and the collection of Irish texts presents an even richer contemporary context for Bede's computistical works than had previously been realised. Our understanding of Insular *computistica* has been especially enhanced thanks to Dáibhí Ó Cróinín's discovery of an Irish 84-year Easter table, known as the Padua *latercus*. He and Daniel Mc Carthy produced a definitive study of this text.[31] Other important contributions are the pioneering editions of computistical textbooks by Ó Cróinín and Immo Warntjes. Along with the Padua *latercus*, Ó Cróinín's discovery and publication of an Irish computus manual, *De ratione conputandi*, in 1988 gave renewed impetus to a field of inquiry that had been well served by previous generations of scholars, especially Bruno Krusch, Bartholomew MacCarthy and Charles Jones.[32] Warntjes's recent edition of the *Munich Computus* and his discovery of the *Computus Einsidlensis* have further expanded our knowledge of Irish computus textbooks and brought this rich and complex material to the attention of a new generation of scholars.[33] The three surviving textbooks are witnesses to a thriving computistical scene in seventh- and early eighth-century Ireland.[34] They are accompanied by other, earlier Irish computistical works, such as the *Sirmond computus* (a copy of the computus exemplar known to Bede),[35] which contained a now lost Irish computus

and included *De divisionibus temporum*;[36] a lost 'Victorian Computus' that was a major source for the *Munich Computus*; and Cummian's letter to Abbot Ségéne of Iona, *De controversia paschali*, c. 630.[37] When considered together, these texts represent an impressive computus collection from early medieval Ireland.

The chronology of the computus texts is contested, but there is broad agreement that they cover the period from c. 630–c. 720, a time of significant computistical activity in Ireland. Indeed the Irish interest in computus is even earlier: for example, Columbanus's writings from the late sixth and early seventh centuries reveal his understanding of computus, which he had learned from his teachers in the Irish monastery of Bangor.[38] Columbanus was an active supporter of the *latercus* reckoning and his acerbic dismissal of Victorius of Aquitaine's Easter tables – coupled with Bede's caustic criticisms more than a century later – did much to discredit Victorius's contribution to computus in the eyes of many modern scholars.[39]

This dynamic phase of Irish computistical activity, encompassing Cummian's letter c. 630 to the creation of Irish computistical textbooks c. 720, is the period when both Victorian and Dionysian reckonings were known in Ireland. Of the three major Irish computistical textbooks, only the *Munich Computus* can be securely dated: it was completed in AD 718/19, which places it towards the end of our date range.[40] This text has preserved sections of a now lost Victorian computus, which can be dated to AD 689 using dating clauses found within the text.[41] The *Computus Einsidlensis* has been dated to the last decade of the seventh century, and Warntjes has shown it was an important source for *Munich*.[42] The date of *De ratione conputandi* has engendered most debate and it is generally placed between the mid-seventh century and AD 720s.[43] Ó Cróinín has dated the text to the mid-seventh century because of its similarities with Cummian's letter; he has argued that the presentation of both texts suggests they shared the same sources and may have been from the same circle.[44] In contrast, Warntjes proposed a later date, suggesting it belongs in the period AD 719–27, that is, after the *Munich Computus*.[45] He argues that *DRC* and *Munich* are interdependent, though the more sophisticated treatment presented in *DRC* suggests it was written later.

These three textbooks were all written in support of the Dionysian Easter, and the question of when they were written has implications for our understanding of the Irish acceptance of this Easter reckoning rather than Victorius of Aquitaine's. In addition to these texts, Warntjes also discovered a prologue to a now-lost Victorian Easter table that can be dated to AD 699, which demonstrates that the Victorian Easter continued to have Irish adherents at such a late date.[46] The final text to consider here is the *Sirmond computus* (Oxford BL 309), which preserves a copy of Bede's computus exemplar. This manuscript contains an extensive compilation of computistical material from Late Antiquity, supplemented by Irish texts. Its contents have been catalogued several times: the full list of 54 items was first recorded by Jones in detail in, 'The "Lost" Sirmond Manuscript of Bede's "Computus"';[47] and, more recently, Ó Cróinín presented a short-title description of the Sirmond texts.[48] In reconstructing the computus used by Bede and others before him, Jones noted that items 3–9 and 13–45, which fall into two books, date from the seventh century and should be the focus of our attention.[49] The *Munich*

computus was influenced by this computistical material and therefore AD 718 is the *terminus ante quem* for many of the texts in this compilation.[50] The actual date of the compilation was unknown until Ó Cróinín discovered a dating clause of AD 658 within what Jones designated 'computistical bits', which indicates when some of the material in this collection was brought together.[51]

Much of the material in the Sirmond collection was in Ireland before the mid-seventh century, as many of those texts were known to Cummian. *Sirmond* also preserves, in Items 3–5, parts of another anonymous Irish computus text: following Eric Graff, I will henceforward refer to this as the *Computus Hibernicus*.[52] Item 3 (fol. 62) is the Preface and *Capitula* for this computus, which were transcribed by Jones in the Appendix of his *Bedae Opera de Temporibus*, and Graff recently presented an updated edition of this material.[53] Item 4 (fols 62v – 64v) is presented as *Sententiae Sancti Augustini et Isidori in laude compoti* in *Sirmond*, and known as *De Computo Dialogus* in its modern edition, *PL* 90.647–52. Item 5 (fols 64v–73v) is the text known as *De divisionibus temporum*, a version of which is available in *PL* 90.653–64, but the recension in *Sirmond* is unpublished.[54] Both works are presented as dialogues between disciple and master.[55] Following his discovery of the dating clause of AD 658, Ó Cróinín argued that this dates the collection of texts in *Sirmond*, including the *Computus Hibernicus*, but this has been challenged by Warntjes who believes 658 is too early for several of these items. He argues that the sophistication of much of the material indicates a late seventh- or early eighth-century date.[56]

The *De divisionibus temporum* is a particularly important and influential text, as its presentation of the divisions of time influenced many of the subsequent computus textbooks, including: *De ratione conputandi*, the *Munich Computus* and Bede's *De temporibus* and *De temporum ratione*. The *Computus Einsidlensis* presents a different list of the divisions of time to the other Irish texts, which has led Warntjes to suggest that it belongs at the beginning of this tradition, pre-dating the version of *De divisionibus temporum* in the *Sirmond computus*.[57] In contrast, Graff proposed a very early date for *De divisionibus temporum*, as he has argued that the version in *Sirmond* contains an interpolation that was not in the original text. In a compelling discussion, he suggests that the chapter, *De cyclo* (concerning the 19-year cycle), was an interpolation into the original text which described 14 divisions of time because, including *De cyclo*, the text contains 15 chapters. He observes that the length of this chapter ('nearly one fifth of the length of *DDT*') and its complexity (it 'is far more advanced than the simple definitions that predominate elsewhere') suggest that a more expert audience was expected than the student for whom the original text was written. He concludes that the original *DDT* was an elementary textbook which was absorbed into a more sophisticated context, and that the process of interpolation was already underway by AD 658, when the computistical material in Bede's exemplar was compiled.[58] Whether *DDT* existed in its extended form as early as 658 or should be dated to the 690s, it was an important source for Bede's computistical works, and its influence on *De temporibus* shall be demonstrated here.

The sophistication of Cummian's letter, *De controversia paschali*, indicates that Irish computists had achieved a high standard of learning by the early 630s,

and it seems more than possible that such computistical materials could have been produced by the mid-seventh century. As noted previously, Cummian knew the Easter reckonings of Victorius and Dionysius, regarding them both as authorities, and the *Sirmond computus* similarly had a high regard for both. Indeed, the majority of Irish computists shared this view, and the only known exceptions are late seventh-century texts in support of Victorius, which disparage the table of Dionysius Exiguus.[59] The tract *De comparatione epactarum* presents a Dionysian response to accusations from adherents of the Victorian Easter.[60] This vitriol is unusual in Irish computus texts from this period, and perhaps these later Victorian texts represent a final rear-guard action against the expansion of the Dionysian Easter in late seventh-century Ireland.[61] In contrast, it is notable that Irish texts in support of the Dionysian tables consistently regarded Victorius as an authority.[62]

The Irish *computistica*, in particular the three surviving textbooks, show that Bede's *De temporibus* and *De temporum ratione* were not new departures in the field of computus, but are best understood within the context of the Insular World. These works share many characteristics, particularly in the structure and presentation of their material; however, a close study of these texts together also allows us to identify significant differences and reveals the priorities and objectives of individual computists, as we shall see when we examine Bede's *De temporibus* in detail.

Structure and content of computistical textbooks

Computistical textbooks have many attributes in common confirming they all belong to the Insular computus tradition, which was founded on a shared inheritance from Late Antiquity. The structure of these textbooks was greatly influenced by Isidore of Seville, especially by his famous encyclopaedic text, the *Etymologiae*; in book 5, *De legibus et temporibus* ('laws and times'), Isidore discussed time in chapters on moments and hours (5.29), days (5.30), night (5.31), the week (5.32), months (5.33), solstices and equinoxes (5.34), seasons of the year (5.35), years (5.36) Olympiads, lustrums and jubilees (5.37), periods and ages (5.38) and historical periods followed by his short chronicle (5.39); in book 6, *De libris et officiis ecclesiasticis* ('books and ecclesiastical offices'), he included chapters on the Easter cycle (6.17), and other liturgical feasts (6.18).[63] Jones suggested that the Wearmouth-Jarrow schools used Books V and VI of Isidore's *Etymologiae* and the seventh-century *Computus Hibernicus* to teach computus prior to the creation of Bede's *De temporibus*.[64]

The majority of the textbooks were organised according to the divisions of time in ascending order from the smallest to the largest, as seen in Isidore. The number and order of these designations varies. Isidore recognised eight divisions of time: *Tempora autem momentis, horis, diebus, mensibus, annis, lustris, saeculis, aetatibus dividuntur* ('Intervals of time are divided into moments, hours, days, months, years, lustrums, centuries and ages').[65] Bede provided seven: *Tempora momentis, horis, diebus, mensibus, annis, saeculis et aetatibus diuiduntur* ('Time is divided into moments, hours, days, months, years, generations, and ages').[66]

He followed Isidore, apart from dispensing with *lustrum*, a five-year period used by the Romans and not a technical means of measuring time. The Irish tradition usually had 14.[67] *De divisionibus temporum*, *De ratione conputandi*, and the *Munich Computus* all include: *atomos*, *momentum*, *minutum*, *punctus*, *hora*, *quadrans*, *dies*, *hebdomada*, *mensis*, *vicissitudo triformis*, *annus*, *aetas*, *saeculum*, and *mundus* (atom, moment, minute, *punctum*, hour, quarter-day, day, week, month, season, year, age, *saeculum*, and *mundus*).[68] As noted already, an additional chapter on the 19-year cycle was introduced into *DDT*: this interpolation occurs appropriately in sequence between *annus* and *aetas*.[69] *De cyclo* was not included amongst the divisions of time in *DRC* and *Munich*; however, the indiction was tacked on out of sequence at the end of the list in *Munich*. Graff also observed that the author of *De divisionibus temporum* reversed the rank in magnitude of *aetas* and *saeculum* from Isidore, which is one of the ways this author's scheme is independent of Isidore's.[70] The list in the first chapter of *Munich* concludes with *saeculum*, *aetas* and *mundus*, in this order, and following Isidore. However, when treated in the text, the order is inverted, with *aetas* coming before *saeculum* (Chapters 42–43), exactly replicating the order of *De divisionibus temporum*. *De ratione conputandi* followed the order of *DDT* in its list of the 14 divisions of time (Chapter 13), and discussed *aetas*, *saeculum* and *mundus* in turn (59–61). All of these texts depart from their listed categories to include additional designations; for example, each has a chapter on the night.[71]

The structure of these textbooks is also not identical, and Bede's *computi* are closer to the interpolated version of *De divisionibus temporum* than to any other source.[72] A chapter on the 19-year cycle was included after *annus* in this text, as we have seen, and Bede did likewise in *De temporibus*. Graff has shown that the interpolated version of *DDT* set a standard arrangement of topics that became very influential because it was followed by Bede and by Carolingian computists.[73] The surviving Irish computistical textbooks are quite different. *De ratione conputandi* and the *Munich Computus* are initially structured on the divisions of time and address all 14 of these in turn before turning to the technicalities of Easter tables. They both include chapters on the **bissextile day** after *De Annis*, which is necessary for an explanation of the Julian year but follow this with chapters on *Aetas*, *Saeculum* and *Mundus* in turn.[74] Like *De divisionibus temporum* and Bede, they omit the Olympiads, lustrums and jubilees treated by Isidore (5.36).[75] Once their treatment of the divisions of time is complete, these texts turn to complex technical discussions of the construction and usage of paschal tables, presenting very detailed analyses of this material.[76] We do not know enough about the structural arrangement of the 'Victorian Computus of AD 689' to determine its role in the transmission of Irish computistical knowledge, beyond its influence on the compiler of *Munich*.

De temporibus and Insular computus tradition

Bede's *De temporibus* is a short work of 22 chapters that runs for 27 pages in the *CCSL* edition, 11 of which consist of the chronicle; in contrast, the *CCSL* edition

of *De temporum ratione* is 282 pages long and its chronicle is 73. The chapters of *DT* are: (1) *De momentis et horis* ('the moment and hour'); (2)–(5) *De die, nocte, hebdomada, mense* ('the day, night, week, month'); (6) *De mensibus Romanorum* ('months of the Romans'); (7) *De solstitio et aequinoctio* ('solstice and equinox'); (8) *De temporibus* ('the seasons'); (9) *De annis* ('years'); (10) *De bissexto* ('bissextile day'); (11) *De circulo decemnouenali* ('19-year cycle'); (12) *De saltu lunae* ('the "leap of the moon"'); (13) *Continentia circuli eiusdem* ('the contents of the paschal cycle'); (14) *Argumenta titulorum paschalium* ('the formulas for the headings of the Paschal table'); (15) *De sacramento temporis paschalis* ('the sacrament of the Easter season'); (16) *De mundi aetatibus* ('the ages of the World'); and (17)–(22) *Cursus et ordo temporum*, *De secunda aetate*, *De tertia aetate*, *De quarta aetate*, *De quinta aetate*, *De sexta aetate* ('the sequence and order of times, the second to sixth ages': i.e., the world chronicle based on the six ages of the world). Isidore is regarded as the most significant influence on Bede's *De temporibus*, and the structure of Bede's work is very similar to the second half of *Etymologiae* 5; however, the importance of Irish computus texts for *DT* should not be overlooked.[77]

The proper divisions of time in Bede's presentation are strictly computistical, which is why he did not include *atomus*, *minutum*, *punctus*, *quadrans*, *vicissitudo triformis* and *mundus*, though they were in his Irish computus source. Kendall and Wallis observe that Bede may have been criticised for not discussing other divisions of time in *De temporibus* as he explained the smaller units, such as *atomos* and *punctus*, in *DTR* 3; although Wallis notes that Bede was unconcerned about the precise definition of these terms because they are conventional, not natural.[78] As noted earlier, all of these texts depart from their listed categories to include additional designations, including a chapter on the night, and, though Bede does not regard the seasons as a formal division of time, they too receive a chapter in *De temporibus*.[79] He also added a chapter on the Roman months and six chapters concerned with Easter calculations, following his Irish computus source. However, as well as not being identical to Isidore, Bede also differs at times from the Irish tradition. After explaining moments and hours in *DT* 1, he concluded with an acknowledgement that time reckoning depends on nature, authority and custom: 'on nature [*natura*] – for example that a common [lunar] year has twelve lunar months; on custom [*consuetudine*] – for example that months are computed at thirty days; and on authority [*auctoritate*] – for example that the week consists of seven days'.[80]

This tripartite division of time has been regarded as a Bedan innovation by many.[81] However, a similar presentation of time can be found in *De ratione conputandi*: *id est auctoritate et natura et artificalitate*.[82] Ó Cróinín observed that the Irish computist used *artificalitate* where Bede has *consuetudine*, and that Bede's subsequent explanations of these divisions differ from those given in *De ratione conputandi*.[83] He suggests that Bede may have derived his division of time from this Irish computistical text, or another text similar to it; but also acknowledges that Bede may have been influenced by the grammarians, for example Pseudo-Augustine's *Ars adbreuiata*.[84] The four elements of *latinitas*,

following the grammatical tradition, were *natura*, *auctoritas*, *consuetudo* and *ratio*.[85] Whether or not Bede was influenced by Irish computistical tradition in this matter is difficult to say, particularly when there is a lack of consensus on the date of *De ratione conputandi*. The debate concerning the date of this text does not rule out Irish computistical tradition as a source for Bede, however, especially if we consider the *capitula* for the *Computus Hibernicus*, which distinguish between *De quadrante naturali* and *De quadrante artificiali*, the natural and artificial quarter-day.[86] Wallis credited the tripartite division of time to Bede, but she has suggested that Bede's adoption of the term *natura* into the computistical lexicon was influenced by his Irish computus source, specifically the text now known as *De computo dialogus*.[87] While the tripartite division of time may not have come directly to Bede from Irish *computistica*, it seems very likely that this tradition influenced his thinking on natural and created or artificial time.

In *De temporibus* 2, 'on the day', Bede was influenced by Isidore's *Etymologiae* and *De natura rerum*, as were the Irish computistical texts,[88] but he demonstrated his independence of thought and engagement with theology. Isidore discussed the beginning of the day according to the Egyptians, Persians, Athenians and Romans (*Etymologiae* 5.30.4) and the Chaldeans, Egyptians and Romans (*De natura rerum* 2.7–110). *De divisionibus temporum* added the Hebrews to this list, who are equated with the Athenians in beginning the day at the sixth hour (i.e., noon); and the Roman custom of beginning the day at midnight was justified by appealing to the authority of Jerome.[89] Bede did not mention the Hebrews, but, unlike his sources, noted that Moses began the day in the morning; Kendall and Wallis suggest he was influenced by the account of Creation in Genesis 1.[90] Bede then brought the reader's attention back to the first Easter, noting that Christ rose from the dead on the evening of the Sabbath as it began to dawn, as an image of humanity's return from darkness into light through the redemptive power of the Resurrection.[91] This serves to remind the reader of the purpose of a computistical textbook, which is to calculate the date of Easter so that the Church's greatest festival can be celebrated at the correct time.

Bede's chapter on the night, *De temporibus* 3, is indebted to Isidore, both his *De natura rerum* and *Etymologiae* 5.31, with little specifically in common with the Irish computus sources. Kendall and Wallis note that the night is not properly a unit of time and suggest that Bede included it because he continued to reflect on the symbolism of Easter when the everlasting light sweeps away temporal and earthly darkness.[92] This seems likely, but all the textbooks include chapters on the night, despite not regarding it as a division of time. *De temporibus* 4, on the week, is again influenced by Isidore (*De natura rerum* and *Etymologiae* 5.30 and 32) and Bede's Irish source. Kendall and Wallis demonstrate that Bede's suggestion that Pope Sylvester ordained that the weekdays should be called *feriae*, in imitation of the Hebrews, rather than named after the planets, came from the *Computus Hibernicus*.[93] Bede discussed the weekdays in his chapter on the week, whereas Isidore included this discussion in his chapter on days. *De divisionibus temporum* presented it in a separate chapter, *De feria* (10) as distinct from the earlier chapter on the day (8) and the later, very short chapter on the week (13) in the *PL* recension

of this text; in contrast, all of this material is contained in Jones's edition of the chapter on the week from Bern MS 417.[94] *De ratione conputandi* discussed the week and weekdays in the same chapter (27), similar to *De temporibus*, and as Bede did again in *De temporum ratione* 8, whereas the *Munich Computus* discussed the week and weekdays in separate chapters (10 and 11).

Bede's chapter on the month, *De temporibus* 5, is primarily influenced by Isidore but again shows similarities with Irish computus texts. Bede's discussion of the number of days in the lunar month, and his observation that solar months are 22 hours longer, which leads to the 11 days of the epact in each year, appears to have no known precise source; however, it may have been inspired by the discussion of the months in the *Disputatio Chori et Praetextati*, an anonymous extract from Macrobius's *Saturnalia* that was contained in Bede's Irish Computus. Leofranc Holford-Strevens has prepared a new edition of this text with extensive commentary, in which he argues for the Irish origin of this abridgement.[95] The text explains intercalations, though focussing on days rather than hours.[96] He observed that the Hebrews begin the month with the new moon, whereas the Romans begin theirs with the kalends, and noted that the Egyptians were the first people to demarcate the months by the sun rather than the moon because the moon's movements are swifter and less reliable. Bede's explanation is similar to Isidore's *Etymologiae* (5.33.2): Jones and Kendall and Wallis note that the same information is found in the Greek original of Theophilus of Alexandria, *Prologus Theophili*, but not in the Latin version.[97] This also appears in various forms in Irish *computistica*: *De divisionibus temporum* 14 (col. 659B); *De ratione conputandi* 27 (lines 4–5); *Computus Einsidlensis* (p. 93); and *Munich* 12 (lines 11–14).

Bede followed his chapter on the month with a designated chapter on the Roman months, *De temporibus* 6, much of which comes from the *Disputatio Chori et Praetextati*. Bede explained the origins of the Roman months, the influence of Romulus, Numa and Caesar on the calendar and the meanings of kalends, nones and ides. He presented a longer discussion of the months in *De temporum ratione* (12–16), and the Irish computistical textbooks similarly pay significant attention to them.[98] While Bede's books on time present the natural month and the Roman months in separate chapters, the surviving Irish computistical textbooks do not separate these, perhaps in recognition of the Roman origin of the calendar. *De divisionibus temporum* and the *Munich computus* follow this by treating each of the Roman months individually in separate chapters.[99] The *capitula* of the Irish computus from MS Bodley 309 may refer to a separate chapter on the Roman months, and, like the other Irish computistical textbooks, it devotes significant attention to the months.[100]

Bede's next chapter, on the solstice and the equinox, *De temporibus* 7, follows the structure of Isidore's *Etymologiae* (5.34). Kendall and Wallis point out that, from a computistical perspective, the next unit after the month is the year, but Bede inserted a discussion of the circle of the year by focussing on the solstice and equinox in this chapter and the seasons in the next.[101] Bede's dates for the equinox and solstice come from Isidore, and the remainder of the chapter concerns the length of the day in different parts of the world, influenced by Pliny's *Natural*

History. The Irish computistical tradition varied in its treatment of the equinox and solstice, which were not referred to in the *capitula* for the *Computus Hiberni-cus*, and were treated following discussions of the year in *De ratione conputandi* and the *Munich Computus*: the chapter in *Munich* is called 'On the division of the year'.[102] Isidore presented the old Roman dates for the equinox and solstice, including 25 March for the vernal equinox, as, unsurprisingly, did Pliny. It is far more unexpected that Bede repeated these dates without comment here, especially considering the computistical significance of the vernal equinox.[103]

One of the major points of contention in the Easter Controversy in the Insular World was the date of the vernal equinox: The *latercus* used the old Roman date of 25 March, whereas the Alexandrian-influenced Easter reckonings of Victorius of Aquitaine and Dionysius Exiguus dated it to 21 March.[104] *De ratione con-putandi* and the *Munich Computus* record both the Roman and Alexandrian dates for both equinoxes and solstices.[105] Bede consistently used the Alexandrian date for the vernal equinox in calculating the date of Easter, and in *De temporibus* 10, he dated the vernal equinox to 21 March without reference to his obsolete date of 25 March in *De temporibus* 7. The Easter tract by Anatolius-Latinus, *De ratione paschali*, which Bede clearly knew when he wrote *De temporum ratione*, also preserved the old Roman dates for the solstices and equinoxes.[106] Bede could have had this text as early as AD 703, and he believed that it was authentic and authoritative.[107]

Bede's unwillingness to openly contradict his sources may reveal something of his attitude to authority at the beginning of his career. His date for the equinox differed from that of Isidore, Pliny and Anatolius-Latinus but he refrained from directly challenging them. Bede overcame this problem in *De temporum ratione* 30 by aligning himself with the greatest authorities on this subject: the Egyptians, who he argued were the most skilled in calculation.[108] He acknowledged that the older dates had been followed by pagans and some teachers of the early Church, but those in the East, especially the Egyptians, dated the vernal equinox to 21 March.

De temporibus 8 concerns the seasons and such a chapter is in keeping with Isidore and the Irish computistical tradition.[109] Bede is influenced by Isidore and Pliny, and there appears to be little in common between Bede and the Irish computus textbooks, except where they share borrowings from Isidore.[110] However, Bede noted that the dates used by the ancients for the beginning of each season were chosen so that the solstices and equinoxes would fall in the middle of the season.[111] No source is identified for this by Jones or Kendall and Wallis, but it seems plausible that Bede received this information from the conclusion of Anatolius-Latinus's *De ratione paschali* (14). Bede quoted directly from this text when repeating the view that the solstices and equinoxes were the mid-points of the seasons in *De temporum ratione* 35, so clearly he knew the text when compiling his second work on time. The view that these dates were the mid-points of the seasons was also expressed in the *Munich Computus* and *De ratione conputandi*, which cited Anatolius by name and quoted the same extract from *De ratione paschali* as Bede in *DTR* 35.[112] It seems plausible that *De ratione paschali*

influenced Bede in *De temporibus*, another text which Bede had received from Ireland, and, whatever its origin, Bede believed it was authentic and representative of the beliefs of the ancients.

In *De temporibus* 9 Bede discussed the years. He briefly noted the number of days in the solar or civil year; that the Romans, Hebrews, Greeks and Egyptians started the year at different times; the length of common and embolismic lunar years, and that both start with the Paschal lunation; and the great year, when all the stars have completed their precise courses and returned to their proper place, which takes 600 solar years according to Josephus. Bede was primarily influenced by Isidore's *De natura rerum* in this chapter. He differs from the surviving Irish computus textbooks, as he does not engage in a discussion about the etymology of the year, and it appears to be his view that the lunar year – whether common or embolismic – began with the paschal moon.[113] Bede's lunar year is a computistical device, as an actual lunar month is slightly longer than 29.5 days: the 12- or 13-month lunar year (with six months of 29 and six months of 30 days) was devised to correlate solar and lunar data.[114] In *Etymologiae* 5.36.3, Isidore noted that a lunar year was 30 days. *De ratione conputandi* presented 13 types of year, compared to Isidore's three and Bede's four, and noted that a lunar year is 29.5 days.[115] In discussing the beginning of the year, *De ratione conputandi* followed Isidore, and agrees with Bede, while the *Munich Computus* placed the beginning of the Egyptian year on the 26 March rather than in autumn.[116] *Munich* also noted that the beginning of a lunar year is dubious.[117]

Bede's next chapter, *De temporibus* 10, focussed on the bissextile (leap-year day), and his structure differed significantly from Isidore: in the *Etymologiae*, Isidore moved from the year to Olympiads, lustrums and jubilees (5.36) and explained the Easter Cycle in book 6.17 and the bissextile in 6.17.25–27. The bissextile day is not a division of time but is crucial for understanding the solar calendar, and essential in a computistical textbook. As the solar year in the Julian calendar is 365.25 days, the regular year is 365 days and every fourth year an extra day is added to bring the calendar into line with the sun. Bede introduced the bissextile day by explaining that it is created by adding quarter-days over a four-year period: Bede had not discussed the *quadrans* (quarter-day) as a unit of time, but it is one of the 14 divisions of time in Irish *compustistica*, and it is named in the *Computus Hibernicus*.[118] The nature of the *quadrans* that adds up to the bissextile is given much attention in the Irish computus textbooks and discussed by Bede in greater detail in *DTR* 38.[119] Bede's treatment of the bissextile in *DT* 10 is concerned with explaining why it is needed, noting that if one observes the precise location of the sun in the sky at dawn on a certain date in the year, the sun will return to that position in the sky at noon on the same date the following year.[120] If the bissextile was not introduced into the calendar, the vernal equinox would fall at the winter solstice after 365 years: the consequences of ignoring the bissextile also appear in Irish computus texts.[121] Bede's treatment of the bissextile day is quite brief, especially when compared to the Irish textbooks.[122] However, Bede and the Irish textbooks share characteristics, particularly on the *quadrans* and the need for the bissextile day. The modern editions of *De temporibus* do not include

sources for this chapter, but it seems most likely that Bede was influenced, at least in part, by his Irish computus sources.[123]

The following chapter, *De temporibus* 11, concerns the 19-year cycle, the structural basis of the Alexandrian Easter calculation and introduced to the West through the Easter tables of Victorius of Aquitaine and Dionysius Exiguus. Kendall and Wallis observe that Bede's chapter on the 19-year cycle is a watershed in *De temporibus*, as he moves from the solar calendar to the paschal table.[124] Bede asserted that the 19-year cycle was instituted by the Synod of Nicaea, as had been stated by Dionysius Exiguus in the prologue to his Easter table; though this view dates back to the late fourth century, it is erroneous.[125] Various traditions relating to the origin of the 19-year cycle, including its angelic inspiration, are referred to in *DDT*'s chapter, *De cyclo*, from the *Sirmond computus*.[126] Bede also revealed his understanding of the workings of this cycle, including its division into the '**ogdoad**' and '**hendecad**', periods of eight and 11 years respectively.[127] The modern editions of *De temporibus* do not suggest any sources for this chapter but Warntjes has shown that there are similar discussions in Irish *computistica* from this period.[128] Isidore discussed the 19-year cycle in *Etymologiae* 6.17.2–10, but his treatment is primarily concerned with the historical development of the cycle, and is less technical than Bede's. It seems clear that Bede's major influence was the *De divisionibus temporum*, which as we have seen included a chapter, *De cyclo*.[129] This further underlines the importance of Irish computistical tradition for Bede's computus.

Bede continued to discuss the paschal table in *De temporibus* 12, *De saltu lunae* (on the 'leap of the moon'). There are no identified sources for this chapter in the modern editions of Bede's work, in which he provided a technical explanation of the role of the *saltus* in harmonising the solar and lunar calendars in the 19-year cycle.[130] The calculation is worked out across 19 years, which is similar to Irish computus textbooks, though they present more elaborate technical discussions.[131] Bede's next chapter, *De temporibus* 13, concerns the contents of Dionysius's paschal table, which he calls a cycle although a 95-year table is not cyclical.[132] The table is presented in eight columns and Bede briefly described the contents and explained the purpose of each one. The columns are: Incarnation years; indiction; lunar epact; concurrent days of the week; **lunar cycle**; dates of *luna* xiv; the date of Easter; and the age of the moon at Easter. Bede's treatment in *De temporum ratione* is considerably longer, with each column title receiving one chapter, followed by a chapter explaining how each is calculated using Dionysius's *Argumenta*.[133] Chapter 13 is important for understanding why Bede wrote *De temporibus* and will be returned to in the next section.

De temporibus 14 concerns the formulas for the headings of the Dionysian Paschal tables. These are based on the Dionysian *argumenta*, and demonstrate how, for example, to calculate Incarnation years from the indiction.[134] Bede's calculation of the present year allows us to date *De temporibus* to AD 703; that authors frequently used the *annus praesens* for their calendrical calculations is a great aid to the historian working with computus texts.[135] The surviving Irish computistical textbooks do not use the algorithms in the Dionysian *argumenta*.

Warntjes observes that they used simpler methods, which were probably based on the calculations they had previously employed for the 84-year reckoning and the Victorian tables.[136] This is an important difference between Bede's work and Irish *computistica*, again demonstrating that he was working within the computistical tradition but not unthinkingly following his forebears.[137]

De temporibus 15 concerns the sacrament of the Easter season, focussing on the theological significance of Easter. As we saw, Bede drew attention to the sacramental importance of Easter in *De temporibus* 2, reminding his reader of the purpose of a computus, and returned to this theme here. He explained the difference between celebrating the Nativity and Easter: the former is an anniversary, while Easter is concerned with the life to come and signifies the transition from death to life.[138] The mysteries of Easter are the reason it is a moveable feast, and Bede set out the three criteria for determining the date. It is celebrated in the third week (*luna* xv–xxi), of the first lunar month of the year, after the vernal equinox. Bede also drew an allusion between the Resurrection occurring on the third day with those events occurring in the third era of the world, which is a reference to the tripartite division of time: before the Law, that is, from Creation to Moses; after the Law, from Moses to Christ; and under grace, from Christ to the present.[139] Bede did not use these eras for chronology, as we shall see, but did recognise the theological significance of other divisions of time in his exegesis.[140] He also highlighted the importance of celebrating Easter on Sunday, which he associated with the first day of Creation and the creation of light; although light was created on the first day, the sun and moon, which are the means of measuring time, were not created until the fourth day (Genesis 1.3–5 and 14–19).[141] The Sunday of Easter also represents the eighth age of the world and inaugurates a new creation.[142] Bede's attention to the theological significance of Easter is unusual in a computistical textbook but most in keeping with Bede's objectives and intentions.

The final section of *De temporibus* contains the chronicle material in Chapters 16–22. The chronicle itself will be examined in detail in the next chapters: for our purposes in contextualising *DT* within the traditions of Insular *computistica*, it is important to note that Bede returned to the divisions of time he presented at the outset of *De temporibus* in concluding his discussion with generations and ages (*saeculi* and *aetates*). These terms were also both used in Isidore's *Etymologiae*, in this order, and, as already mentioned, in reverse sequence in Irish *computistica*. Isidore followed his discussion of Olympiads, lustrums and jubilees with *saeculi* and *aetates* and concluded book 5 with his short chronicle, *De descriptione temporum*, an epitome of his *Chronica Maiora*.[143] *De divisionibus temporum* ended with *aetas*, *saeculum* and *mundus*, as did other Irish *computi*.[144] *DDT* was a very significant source for Bede's *De temporibus*, but he does not follow it here, either in its sequence or by including *mundus*. Although he used *mundus* several times to mean the world in *De natura rerum*, the probable companion to *De temporibus*, as we have seen, Bede did not ascribe temporality to this term. Graff has highlighted that Irish texts such as *De divisionibus temporum* used *athomus* and *mundus* as framing symmetry when outlining the divisions of time, and he points out the significance that both terms had spatial and temporal connotations.[145] Although Bede

did not include *mundus* as the largest division of time, his chronicle presents the totality of universal history from Creation to the end of the world, and, as such, is a satisfactory conclusion to the discussion of time measurement in *De temporibus*.

This systematic analysis of *De temporibus* has shown that Bede was working within the computistical tradition but not unthinkingly following his forebears. His computistical knowledge is clear, as is the influence of his Irish sources, which provide an important context for his work. On occasion, Bede's exegetical understanding of time and Easter comes to the fore, and his critical engagement with his sources is also evident, though he appears unwilling to directly contradict authorities here. These are traits that become more pronounced later in his career.

Why did Bede write *De temporibus*?

It is clear that Bede's *De temporibus* is part of a vibrant Insular tradition of computus textbooks, but why did he write it when he did? Bede's preoccupation with the intricacies of the Easter Controversy is well known and it is therefore unsurprising that he wrote about time reckoning. His most famous discussions of Easter are found in *De temporum ratione* and the *Historia ecclesiastica*, completed in 725 and 731 respectively, after Iona accepted the Dionysian reckoning in 716 and by which time the dispute between the Victorian and Dionysian Easters had also been resolved in favour of Dionysius; the British Church did persist with the *latercus* until 768.[146] However, *De temporibus* was written in 703 when the disputes about the dating of Easter raged and the ultimate success of the Dionysian tables might have seemed unlikely.

The Dionysian tables in use in the early eighth century were an extension of the original 95-year table, which ran from 532 to 626 inclusive; in 616, Felix Gillitanus had created a continuation of another five 19-year cycles to run from 627 to 721, meaning another extension would soon be required.[147] Ceolfrith referred to this in his letter to Nechtan, c. 710, assuring the Pictish king that:

> *Quibus termino adpropinquantibus, tanta hodie calculatorum exuberat copia, ut etiam in nostris per Brittaniam ecclesiis plures sint, qui mandatis memoriae ueteribus illis Aegyptiorum argumentis facillime possint in quotlibet spatia temporum paschales protendere circulos, etiam si ad quingentos usque et XXX duos uoluerint annos; quibus expletis, omnia quae ad solis et lunae, mensis et septimanae consequentiam spectant, eodem quo prius ordine recurrunt.*
>
> This table is approaching its end but there are so many mathematicians today that even in our churches here in Britain there are several who have committed to memory these ancient rules of the Egyptians and can easily continue the Easter cycles for an indefinite number of years, even up to 532 years if they wish; after this period all that concerns the succession of the sun, the moon, the month, and the week returns in the same order as before.[148]

The Dionysian table needed to be extended every 95 years because if it were simply repeated the four-year leap or bissextile cycle would be out of sequence: 95 cannot be evenly divided by 4, therefore the remainder of 3 would skew the leap-cycle in subsequent years. Critics of this reckoning argued that because its solar data did not repeat it was not truly cyclical. The *Munich computus* (c. 67) demonstrated this by showing how the bissextile day affects the wrong years in subsequent runnings of the table.[149] Warntjes notes that this chapter is not found in other Irish computistical textbooks, and was probably from the lost 'Victorian computus of AD 689', as it argues for the superiority of the Victorian Easter cycle over the Dionysian tables.[150] This argument is based on a discussion of the **concurrent**, which is the weekday of a fixed date in the Julian calendar: it is 24 March in the Dionysian table, but it can help to think of one's own birthday; the stated date falls a day later each year, and two days later following a bissextile. The seven-day week and the four-year leap cycle mean that weekday data recur in the same order every 28 years (7 x 4 = 28). This 28-year cycle is important for determining Easter Sunday and is represented in the fourth column of the Dionysian table, which presents the concurrent, that is, the weekday of 24 March is supplied for every year of that table. The term 'concurrent' appears to have been introduced to the computistical lexicon by Dionysius.

The chapter in the *Munich Computus* recognised that the concurrent data is accurate for the original Dionysian table (532–626) as Dionysius was aware of the leap-year cycle; however, the author argues that if the table is simply extended, its calendar data will be inaccurate because the leap years according to the table will be out of sequence with actual leap years. This problem will be exacerbated every time the 95-year table is repeated. The source for *Munich* assumes that those extending the Dionysian table would not understand the workings of the leap-year cycle and would not make the necessary adjustments, which was not the case. Such concerns are not applicable to the Victorian table, which *Munich* described as 'a true cycle' (c. 65) because all the solar and lunar data repeated after the table had run its course in 532 years.[151] Victorius's consular years do not apply in the table's second running, which began in 560, but everything else remains the same. The *Sirmond computus*, which provided Bede with much of his knowledge of the Dionysian Easter, included a full Victorian Easter table, indicating its ongoing appeal.[152]

Bede must have been aware of these criticisms of the Dionysian Easter reckoning because he addressed the problem in his discussion of the concurrent in *De temporibus* 13. To do so, Bede demonstrated that the Dionysian table was a complete paschal cycle of 532 years. Dionysius Exiguus's original table ran for 95 years – five cycles of 19 years – and in explaining the concurrent, Bede called attention to the solar cycle of 28 years and asserted that 28 19-year cycles have to be written out so that each concurrent of the 28-year solar cycle begins a 19-year cycle; the full Paschal cycle is then completed in 532 years (28 x 19).[153] We know that Bede had created a 532-year Easter cycle based on Dionysian principles when he wrote *De temporum ratione* in 725, and it is likely that he had produced this earlier as a new Easter table was needed in 722.[154] While he may not have created

a 532-year Easter cycle as early as 703, *De temporibus* makes clear that he recognised one could do so. In drawing attention to the 532-year cycle in *De temporibus* 13, Bede refuted the charge that the Dionysian Easter was not truly cyclical. It was most appropriate to do so in a discussion of the concurrent, which is the only column of the Dionysian Easter table solely concerned with the solar cycle; the rest focus on lunar matters or the luni-solar cycle. Bede, therefore, demonstrated that the full Paschal calculation of Dionysius would be complete in 532 years and was in no way inferior to Victorius's reckoning.

The *latercus* 84-year reckoning contained three solar cycles of 28 years and was truly cyclical with regard to its solar data, though it was less accurate regarding its lunar calculations.[155] Proponents of the *latercus* may also have denigrated the Dionysian Easter because its solar data were not cyclical. In countering such arguments in his discussion of the concurrent, Bede may have been answering criticisms of Dionysius from Iona. There are other known critiques of the Dionysian Easter from late seventh-century Ireland; for example, the 'Victorian Prologue of AD 699', which sought to undermine Dionysius's Incarnation chronology. It did so by placing Dionysius's AD alongside Victorius's *Annus Passionis* and the Septuagint *Annus mundi*, in which Victorius's AP 1 equates with AD 28, implying Dionysius believed Christ died when he was 28, which would be in contravention of Luke's gospel as it suggests Christ was baptised when he was about 30.[156] Immo Warntjes has argued that criticisms of this sort provide a context for Bede's works on time.[157]

Addressing criticisms of the Dionysian Easter reckoning may have been one of Bede's purposes in writing *De temporibus*; however, as we have seen, he also set out to explain the workings of the Dionysian Easter to his students, believing such information was necessary.[158] This would have been particularly pertinent if discussions about the next extension of the tables, including how to account for the potential discrepancies in the solar cycle, were already underway in the early eighth century; the date of the work is significant in this respect. *De temporibus* was completed in AD 703, the first year of the last 19-year cycle in the second running of the Dionysian table; if concerns about extending the table had not come to the fore already, it is very likely they would have then. Indeed, many computus texts and discussions can be dated to 703. For example, Immo Warntjes has identified a text in London, British Library, Cotton Caligula A XV fol. 110r-117v, which is dated to 703, and Paris BN, lat. 10837, fols 40v-41v has an Easter table for the years 703–759 inclusive.[159] The date of composition of *De temporibus* is unlikely, therefore, to be a coincidence. This is also relevant for understanding the purpose of the work's chronicle, which clearly terminates in 703, and to which our attention must now turn.

Notes

1 *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People* [*HE*], bk 5, c. 24, ed. and tr. B. Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors (Oxford 1969, repr. 2001) p. 566.
2 *De temporibus* [*DT*], ed. C.W. Jones, *CCSL* 123C (Turnhout 1980) pp. 585–611, including the chronicle (cc. 17–22) ed. T. Mommsen from *MGH Auctores antiquissimi*

13, *Chronica Minora* 3 (Berlin 1898) pp. 247–317; *De natura rerum* [*DNR*], ed. C.W. Jones, *CCSL* 123A (Turnhout 1975) pp. 173–234: Kendall and Wallis, *Bede: On the Nature of Things*. *DT* can be dated accurately because of the dating clauses contained within it, which calculate the *annus praesens*, as is often the case in computistical texts. See M. Lapidge, 'Beda Venerabilis,' pp. 44–135 at 55–64. The date of *DNR* has engendered more debate, on this see, most recently: Darby, *Bede and the End of Time*, pp. 18–21.

 3 *HE* 5:24, p. 570.

 4 *De temporum ratione* [*DTR*], preface, lines 1–7, ed. C.W. Jones, *CCSL* 123 B (Turnhout 1977) p. 263; Wallis, *Bede: The Reckoning of Time*, p. 3.

 5 C.W. Jones did not include Chapters 66–71 in his first edition of Bede's *De temporum ratione*: *Bedae Opera de Temporibus* [hereafter *BOT*]. In his *CCSL* volume he reproduced the first 65 chapters from *BOT*, and reprinted Mommsen's edition of Chapters 66–71, from *MGH Chronica Minora* 3, pp. 247–327. For a comprehensive examination of Bede's eschatology, see Darby, *Bede and the End of Time*.

 6 See Introduction for discussion of the key figures and developments in the Insular Easter Controversy.

 7 See Jones, 'The "lost" Sirmond Manuscript,' pp. 204–19, repr. with omission of the appendix in *Bede, the Schools and the Computus*, ed. W.M. Stevens (Aldershot 1994) article X; Jones, *BOT*, pp. 105–13; D. Ó Cróinín, 'The Irish provenance of Bede's Computus,' repr. in *idem*., *Early Irish History and Chronology* (Dublin 2003) pp. 173–90; and D. Ó Cróinín, 'Bede's Irish Computus'. I. Warntjes, 'A newly discovered Prologue of AD 699 to the Easter Table of Victorius of Aquitaine in an unknown Sirmond manuscript,' *Peritia* 21 (2010) pp. 255–84. M. MacCarron, 'Bede, Irish *computistica* and *Annus Mundi*,' *Early Medieval Europe* 23.3 (2015) pp. 290–307. See later in this chapter for discussion.

 8 Charles Plummer wrote that Easter appears to occupy an inordinate position in Bede's mind compared to its real importance, 'Introduction,' in C. Plummer (ed.), *Bedae Opera Historica* (Oxford 1896) pp. XXXIX–XL. Easter is described as Bede's 'obsession' in later scholarship, see e.g., Patrick Wormald, 'The Venerable Bede and the "Church of the English",' in G. Rowell (ed.), *The English Religious Tradition and the Genius of Anglicanism* (Eugene, OR 1994) pp. 13–32 at 18, repr. in P. Wormald, *The Times of Bede, 625–865: Studies in Early English Christianity and Its Historian*, ed. S. Baxter (Oxford 2006) pp. 207–27 at 211; and C.G. Hartz, 'Bede and the grammar of time,' *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 15.4 (2007) pp. 625–40 at 625.

 9 Bede, *Epistola ad Pleguinam*, ed. C.W. Jones, *BOT*, pp. 307–15, repr. in *CCSL* 123C, pp. 617–26; Wallis, *Bede: The Reckoning of Time*, pp. 405–15.

10 See P. Darby, 'Bede, iconoclasm and the Temple of Solomon,' *Early Medieval Europe* 21.4 (2013) pp. 390–421 at 405.

11 Kendall and Wallis, *Bede: On the Nature of Things*, pp. 56–64.

12 However, Cambridge University Library, Gg. II. 21, pp. 183–89 (twelfth-century manuscript) is recorded as just the chronicle but the whole work is included, see Mommsen, *MGH Chronica Minora* 3, p. 241; M.L.W. Laistner with H.H. King, *A Hand-list of Bede Manuscripts* (Ithaca, NY 1943) p. 147; Jones, *CCSL* 123C, p. 582; and Kendall and Wallis, who correct a shelf-mark error in Mommsen and Jones, p. 57. On the manuscript transmission of the chronicle, see Lapidge, 'Beda Venerabilis,' pp. 69–70.

13 Jones, *CCSL* 123C, p. 580.

14 Kendall and Wallis, *Bede: On the Nature of Things*, pp. 44–56.

15 See J.A. Giles, *The Complete Works of Venerable Bede*, Vol. 6 (London 1843) p. 99; *PL* 90.187; Jones, *CCSL* 123A, p. 173; Kendall and Wallis, *Bede: On the Nature of Things*, p. 71. On the poem as preface for both works, see Wallis, *Bede: The*

Reckoning of Time, p. LXVI; and Darby, *Bede and the End of Time*, p. 20. On the authenticity of the poem, see C.W. Jones, 'Manuscripts of Bede's *De Natura Rerum*,' *Isis* 27 (1937) pp. 430–40.

16 Jones, *CCSL* 123A, p. 189; tr. Kendall and Wallis, *Bede: On the Nature of Things*, p. 71.

17 Certain manuscripts of *De temporibus* contain a prologue influenced by Irish *computistica*, see Vatican BAV Pal. lat. 1447, 3r – v; Vatican BAV Pal. lat. 1448, 1v – 2v; and Schaffhausen SB 61, 22r – v. See also Warntjes, *Munich Computus*, pp. CIX–CX, note 319. I am grateful to Immo Warntjes for discussing these manuscripts with me.

18 Jones, *CCSL* 123B, pp. 242–56. See Jones, *BOT*, pp. 144–61, for additional information on the 133 manuscripts cited there and identifying the most important witnesses for his edition. Of the 104 manuscripts that he examined, 45 were written within 70–100 years of *DTR* being published, *BOT*, p. 140; Wallis, *Bede: The Reckoning of Time*, p. LXXXVI. Lapidge, 'Beda Venerabilis,' pp. 62 and 65–68. On extant manuscripts of *DTR* compared to the *HE*, see Westgard, 'Bede and the continent,' pp. 201–15.

19 See Lapidge, 'Beda Venerabilis,' pp. 71–74.

20 Mommsen, *MGH Chronica Minora* 3, pp. 247–327; Jones, *BOT* and *CCSL* 123B and 123C (see earlier for page numbers).

21 Kendall and Wallis, *Bede: On the Nature of Things*, pp. 44–64.

22 Jones, *CCSL* 123B, p. 241. See also Wallis, *Bede: The Reckoning of Time*, p. LXXXVI.

23 Wallis, *Bede: The Reckoning of Time*, p. LXXXVII; Jones, *BOT*, p. 140, and *CCSL* 123B, p. 241.

24 Jones, *CCSL* 123B, p. 241.

25 *De temporum ratione*, preface, line 1, ed. Jones, p. 263. See Wallis, *Bede: The Reckoning of Time*, p. XVI; Darby, *Bede and the End of Time*, p. 17.

26 Giles, *The Complete Works of Venerable Bede*, p. V. Wallis, *Bede: The Reckoning of Time*, p. XVI.

27 Bede's chronicles from *De temporibus* and *De temporum ratione* are commonly known by the titles *Chronica Minora* and *Chronica Maiora* respectively; this nomenclature has been in use since Mommsen's edition of the chronicles for *MGH* and will be discussed further in Chapter Two.

28 *PL* 90.277–92C (*De temporibus*) and 293–578D (*De temporum ratione*). For the first printed editions, see C.W. Jones, *Bedae Pseudepigrapha* (New York, NY 1939) pp. 5–19. For Hervagius see Jones, *Bedae Pseudepigrapha*, pp. 14–18; and Kendall and Wallis, *Bede: On the Nature of Things*, pp. 67–68.

29 Laistner with King, *A Hand-list of Bede Manuscripts*, pp. 144–45.

30 Jones, 'The "lost" Sirmond Manuscript'; *BOT*, pp. 105–13.

31 Ó Cróinín and Mc Carthy, 'The "lost" Irish 84-year Easter table rediscovered,' pp. 227–42, repr. in Ó Cróinín, *Early Irish History and Chronology*, pp. 58–75; and Mc Carthy, 'Easter principles and a fifth-century lunar cycle,' pp. 204–24. See further in Introduction.

32 *De ratione conputandi* [*DRC*], ed. Ó Cróinín in Walsh and Ó Cróinín, *Cummian's Letter*, pp. 115–213. See, e.g., B. Krusch, *Studien zur Christlich-Mittelalterlichen Chronologie: der 84Jährige Ostercyclus und Seine Quellen* (Leipzig 1880); *idem.*, 'Die Einführung des griechischen Paschalritus im Abendlande,' pp. 99–169; *idem.*, *Studien* II; B. Mac Carthy, *Annals of Ulster*, Vol. 4 (Dublin 1901); Jones, *BOT*.

33 Warntjes, *Munich Computus*. For *Einsidlensis*, see www.e-codices.unifr.ch/de/list/one/sbe/0321; and I. Warntjes, 'A newly discovered Irish Computus: *Computus Einsidlensis*,' *Peritia* 19 (2005) pp. 61–64.

34 On their designation as Irish, see D. Ó Cróinín, 'A seventh-century computus from the circle of Cummianus,' *PRIA* 82 C 11 (1982) pp. 405–30, repr. in *Early Irish History and Chronology*, pp. 99–130; Warntjes, *Munich Computus*, pp. LXXVII–XCVI;

idem., 'A newly discovered Irish Computus'; and J. Bisagni and I. Warntjes, 'The early old Irish material in the newly discovered *Computus Einsidlensis* (c. D 700),' *Ériu* 58 (2008) pp. 77–105.

35 Jones, 'The "Lost" Sirmond Manuscript,'; D. Ó Cróinín, 'The Irish provenance of Bede's Computus'; and Ó Cróinín, 'Bede's Irish Computus'.

36 See E. Graff, 'The recension of two Sirmond texts: *Disputatio Morini* and *De divisionibus temporum*,' in I. Warntjes and D. Ó Cróinín (eds.), *Computus and Its Cultural Context in the Latin West, AD 300–1200: Proceedings of the 1st International Conference on the Science of Computus in Ireland and Europe* (Turnhout 2010) pp. 112–42.

37 Ed. and tr. in Walsh and Ó Cróinín, *Cummian's Letter*, pp. 56–97. See further in Introduction.

38 See S.C. McCluskey, 'Astronomies in the Latin West,' pp. 139–60; D. Ó Cróinín, 'Mo Sinu maccu Min and the computus at Bangor,' *Peritia* 1 (1982) pp. 281–95, repr. in *Early Irish History and Chronology*, pp. 35–47; and Ó Cróinín, 'The computistical works of Columbanus,' in M. Lapidge (ed.), *Columbanus: Studies on the Latin Writings* (Woodbridge 1997) pp. 264–70, repr. in *Early Irish History and Chronology*, pp. 48–55.

39 See e.g.: Columbanus, *Epistola I*, ed. G.S.M. Walker (Dublin 1979) pp. 3–13; Bede, *DTR* 6, ed. Jones; and Krusch, *Studien* II, p. 15. For a more favourable view see the perceptive comments of Philipp Nothaft in his review of 'Mary Kelly and C. Doherty (eds.), *Music and the Stars: Mathematics in medieval Ireland* (Dublin 2013),' *Peritia* 24–25 (2013–14) pp. 348–54 at 350; and Immo Warntjes' review of 'Kendall and Wallis, *Bede: On the Nature of Things*,' *The Medieval Review* 12.08.01 (https://scholarworks.iu.edu/journals/index.php/tmr/article/view/17613).

40 Warntjes, *Munich Computus*, pp. LVII–LXI.

41 See Warntjes, *Munich Computus*, 41 and 62 and pp. LVII–LXI.

42 Warntjes, 'A newly discovered Irish Computus'; and *Munich Computus*, pp. CXLI–CLII.

43 Wesley Stevens has dated this text to the mid-ninth century, but this is most unlikely: 'Ars computi quomodo inventa est,' in R. Corradini, M. Diesenberger and M. Niederkorn-Bruck (eds.), *Zwischen Niederschrift und Wiederschrift: Hagiographie und Historiographie im Spannungsfeld von Kompendienüberlieferung und Editionstechnik* (Vienna 2010) pp. 29–65 at 50–51.

44 D. Ó Cróinín, 'A seventh-century Irish computus from the circle of Cummianus,' *PRIA* 82 C 11 (1982) pp. 405–30. Marina Smith has disagreed with Ó Cróinín and dated the text to the late-seventh century: *Understanding the Universe in Seventh-century Ireland* (Woodbridge 1996) p. 156.

45 Warntjes, *Munich Computus*, LV, and CXCI–CXCVI.

46 See Warntjes, 'A newly discovered Prologue of AD 699'. Cf. also *De comparatione epactarum Dionysii et Victorii*, ed. I. Warntjes, in *Munich Computus*, Appendix 2, pp. 322–26.

47 Jones, 'The "Lost" Sirmond Manuscript,' pp. 213–19: the end of this article including the important appendix was unfortunately not included in Jones' collected essays, *Bede, the Schools and the Computus*, Article X. See also Jones, *BOT*, pp. 106–7, for a short list of the contents of *Sirmond* containing 45 items to conclude with Victorius' Easter table: here he notes that the remaining items are later computistical works, p. 108. See Wallis, *Bede: The Reckoning of Time*, pp. LXXII–LXXVII.

48 Ó Cróinín, 'Bede's Irish Computus,' pp. 202–3. Graff reprinted this list as Appendix 1 in 'The recension of two Sirmond texts,' pp. 137–38.

49 'The "Lost" Sirmond Manuscript,' p. 209. See Wallis, *Bede: The Reckoning of Time*, p. LXXII; and Warntjes, *Munich Computus*, p. XXII, note 37.

50 Wallis, *Bede: The Reckoning of Time*, p. LXXII.

51 For the text of the dating clause and discussion, see Ó Cróinín, 'The Irish provenance of Bede's Computus,' p. 177, and Bede's Irish Computus,' pp. 209–10; and my 'Bede, Irish *computistica* and *Annus Mundi*'.

52 See Graff, 'The recension of two Sirmond texts,' Appendix 2.

53 Jones, *BOT*, pp. 393–94; Graff, 'The recension of two Sirmond texts,' pp. 139–40, Appendix 2. Cf. the edition by Alfred Cordoliano in 'Une encylopédie carolingienne de comput: les "Sententiae in laude compoti",' *Bibliothèque de l'école des chartes* 104 (1943) pp. 237–43 at 242–43, which is transcribed from Tours, MS 334, fol. 20. Warntjes disagrees with these assessments and has argued that the table of contents refers to a late eighth-century Frankish Computus based on Irish material: *Munich Computus*, p. XXVIII, note 55.

54 The recension in *PL* 90.653–64 is later and significantly different from col. 657B onwards, see Jones, 'The "Lost" Sirmond Manuscript,' p. 213; Jones, *BOT*, p. 106; Warntjes, *Munich Computus*, p. L, note 115; Graff, 'The recension of two Sirmond texts,' pp. 112–42.

55 On both texts, see Jones, *Bedae Pseudepigrapha*, pp. 48–51.

56 Ó Cróinín, 'The Irish provenance of Bede's Computus'. Graff supports Ó Cróinín's date for the compilation: 'The recension of two Sirmond texts'. See Warntjes, *Munich Computus*, p. XXII, note 37.

57 Warntjes, *Munich Computus*, pp. CXLII–CLIII.

58 Graff, 'The recension of two Sirmond texts,' pp. 117–25, quotations on 122 and 123. Cf. D. Ó Cróinín, 'The date, provenance, and earliest use of the works of Virgilius Maro Grammaticus,' in G. Bernt, F. Rädel and G. Silagi (eds.), *Tradition und Wertung: festschrift für Franz Brunhölzl zum 65: Geburtstag* (Sigmaringen 1989) pp. 13–22 for discussion of knowledge of the *Sirmond* Computus before Bede.

59 See *Munich Computus*, 67; and Warntjes, 'A newly discovered Prologue of AD 699'.

60 *De comparatione epactarum Dionysii et Victorii*, ed. Warntjes.

61 See Warntjes, 'Victorius vs Dionysius,' pp. 33–97.

62 See, for example: *Munich Computus*, 41, 62–68; and Graff, 'The recension of two Sirmond texts'. Bede (like Columbanus) did not share their generous attitude to Victorius, which is the most obvious way in which he differs from his Irish computus sources; see further in this chapter.

63 Isidore, *Etymologiae*, ed. W.M. Lindsay (Oxford 1911); tr. S.T. Barney et al. (Cambridge 2006).

64 Jones, *BOT*, pp. 130–31.

65 *Etymologiae*, 5.29.1, ed. Lindsay; tr. Barney et al., p. 125.

66 *DT* 1, line 2, ed. Jones; tr. Kendall and Wallis, *Bede: On the Nature of Things*. Cf. *DTR* 2, lines 2–3, ed. Jones.

67 *Computus Einsidlensis* listed ten, which has encouraged Warntjes to argue that it belongs at the beginning of the tradition, see *Munich Computus*, pp. CXLII–CXLIII and p. 4, notes to lines 4–16.

68 *DDT* 90.653A; *DRC* 13; *Munich* 1. Cf. also the capitular list for the *Computus Hibernicus*, which refers to many of these divisions of time, including *De quadrante naturali* and *De quadrante artificali* (see discussion): Graff, Appendix 2. *Computus Einsidlensis* differs and does not include *mundus*: Warntjes, *Munich Computus*, p. CXLIII. Several of these terms are difficult to translate, and the last three, *aetas*, *saeculum* and *mundus*, will be discussed later herein and in Chapter Two.

69 See earlier in this chapter; and Graff, 'The recension of two Sirmond texts,' pp. 117–25.

70 On *DDT*'s relationship with Isidore, see Graff, 'The recension of two Sirmond texts,' 120 and Figure 4.

71 On the night, see Isidore, *Etym*. 5.31; *DDT* 11; *DRC* 25; *Munich* 9.

72 Immo Warntjes suggests that Bede's structure in *De temporibus* was influenced by a passage at the beginning of *Computus Einsidlensis* (p. 85) and *De ratione conputandi* (c. 14): *Munich Computus*, pp. CIX–CX, and note 319.

73 Graff, 'The recension of two Sirmond texts,' p. 125 and Figure 6. Cf. Warntjes, *Munich Computus*, p. CXIII.

74 *DRC* 59–61; *Munich* 42–44.

75 See Graff, 'The recension of two Sirmond texts,' p. 120, on *DDT*'s relationship with Isidore.

76 *DRC* 62–115; *Munich* 45–67. See, e.g., their discussion of 'ogdoads' and 'hendecads', the eight-year and 11-year cycles, that underlie the 19-year cycle: *DRC* 81; *Munich* 52. See Graff, 'The recension of two Sirmond texts,' p. 125; and Warntjes, 'The Munich Computus,' pp. 31–85 at 62–69. In Warntjes's preliminary discussion of the *Computus Einsidlensis*, he suggests that it follows a similar structure: 'A newly discovered Irish Computus,' p. 63.

77 I have elsewhere argued that Bede's decision to adopt the Vulgate *Anno Mundi* in his first chronicle was in response to the Septuagint chronology following the short view of Christ's public ministry, which was promoted by Victorius of Aquitaine, and transmitted to Bede through Irish *computistica*, including the *Sirmond computus*: MacCarron, 'Bede, *Annus Mundi* and Irish *Computistica*'.

78 Kendall and Wallis, *Bede: On the Nature of Things*, p. 166; Wallis, *Bede: The Reckoning of Time*, p. 268 and note 36.

79 On the night, see Bede, *DT* 3. On the seasons: Bede, *DT* 8. See Appendix 1, 'Table of chapter headings in Bede's *De temporibus* and his principal sources,' i.e., Isidore's *Etymologiae*, the *Capitula* from the *Computus Hibernicus*, and *DDT*.

80 *DT* 1, lines 11–14, *natura, ut annum communem duodecim menses lunares habere; consuetudine, ut menses triginta diebus computari; auctoritate, ut hebdomadam septem feriis constare*: Jones, *CCSL* 123C, p. 585; tr. Kendall and Wallis, *Bede: On the Nature of Things*, p. 107. Cf. *DTR* 2, ed. Jones.

81 See Jones, *BOT*, p. 331; Wallis, *Bede: The Reckoning of Time*, p. 264; F. Wallis, '*Si naturam quæras*: Reframing Bede's "Science",' in S. DeGregorio (ed.), *Innovation and Tradition in the Writings of the Venerable Bede* (Morgantown 2006) pp. 65–99 at 79; and A. Rabin, 'Historical re-collections: Rewriting the world chronicle in Bede's *De temporum ratione*,' *Viator* 36 (2005) pp. 23–39 at 30.

82 *DRC* 6, lines 1–2, ed. Ó Cróinín. On the Irish origin of *De ratione conputandi*, see Ó Cróinín, 'A seventh-century Irish Computus'.

83 See Ó Cróinín, notes on *DRC* 6, p. 120.

84 Ó Cróinín, notes on *DRC* 6, p. 120. Rabin also suggests that Bede's framing of time was influenced by grammatical rules, but he appears not to know the Irish computistical tradition as represented by *DRC*; he also argues that Bede's ultimate influence may have been Augustine's *De doctrina christiana*, but he does not engage with the debate on whether or not a grammatical text by Augustine can be identified: 'Historical re-collections,' p. 30. On the attribution of a grammatical text to Augustine, see Vivien Law, '*Autoritas, consuetudo* and *ratio* in St Augustine's Ars grammatica,' in G.L. Bursill-Hall, S. Ebbesen and K. Koerner (eds.), *De Ortu Grammaticae: Studies in Medieval Grammar and Linguistic Theory in Memory of Jan Pinborg* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia 1990) pp. 191–207. I am grateful to Jason O'Rorke for discussion of the Latin grammatical tradition.

85 See Law, '*Autoritas, consuetudo* and *ratio*,' pp. 193 ff.

86 See Jones, *BOT*, p. 393; and Graff, Appendix 2, p. 139.

87 Wallis, '*Si naturam quæras*,' pp. 86–88.

88 See Warntjes, *Munich* 8, notes on lines 34–39, pp. 26–27.

89 *DDT* 8, *PL* 90.657A – B. See also *Munich* 8, lines 38–43.

90 *DT* 2, line 6, ed. Jones. See Kendall and Wallis, *Bede: On the Nature of Things*, p. 167.

91 *DT* 2, lines 7–9, ed. Jones. See Kendall and Wallis, *Bede: On the Nature of Things*, p. 167.

92 Kendall and Wallis, *Bede: On the Nature of Things*, pp. 167–68. Their interpretation is influenced by *DTR* 7.

93 *DT* 4, lines 7–10, ed. Jones. See *DDT* 10.658A, and cf. Jones, *BOT*, pp. 394–95, who transcribed the relevant section from the Irish computus from Bern MS, 417, fols.

52v–53r. This text differs a little from the *PL* edition of *DDT*. Kendall and Wallis, *Bede: On the Nature of Things*, p. 109, note 14. Cf. *Munich Computus* 11, lines 32–36.

94 See Jones, *BOT*, pp. 394–95.

95 L. Holford-Strevens, *The* Disputatio Chori et Praetextati*: The Roman Calendar for Beginners* (Turnhout 2019); I am grateful to the author for allowing me to consult an early draft of his edition.

96 Holford-Strevens, *Disputatio Chori et Praetextati*, lines 124–43. Cf. Bede's longer discussion of this topic in *DTR* 11. See also Warntjes' analysis of *Munich*'s discussion of the epact in the *latercus*: 'The Munich Computus,' pp. 46–51 and 62–69.

97 Jones, *BOT*, pp. 296–97, notes to lines 11–12 and cf. *CCSL* 123C, notes to lines 13–15; Kendall and Wallis, *Bede: On the Nature of Things*, p. 109, note 19. For the Latin version of the *Prologus Theophili*, see A.A. Mosshammer, *The Prologues on Easter of Theophilus of Alexandria and [Cyril]* (Oxford 2017).

98 *DDT* 15–29; *DRC* 28–42; *Munich* 12–29.

99 The *PL* edition of *DDT* concludes with the discussion of the months; the last two chapters are a list of the ten months according to Romulus (28), and the 12 months of Numa, with comments on the later amendments to the names of the months (29).

100 See Jones, *BOT*, p. 393; Graff, Appendix 2, p. 139.

101 See Kendall and Wallis, *Bede: On the Nature of Things*, p. 169.

102 *DRC* 47; *Munich* 38; see this chapter for *DRC* and *Munich* on the year.

103 See Kendall and Wallis, *Bede: On the Nature of Things*, pp. 169–70 and Introduction.

104 See further in Introduction. Cummian's letter refers to an unidentified Easter reckoning of Patrick, which dated the equinox to 21 March: Walsh and Ó Cróinín, *Cummian's Letter*, pp. 56–97 at 85, lines 208–10. See D.P. Mc Carthy, 'The paschal cycle of St Patrick,' pp. 94–137.

105 The treatment in *Munich* is significantly longer and the computist attempts to explain the discrepancy between the 'Greek' and Roman reckonings. See *Munich Computus* 38, lines 28–38.

106 *De ratione paschali* [*DRP*] 2 and 14, ed. and tr. D. Mc Carthy and A. Breen, *The Ante-Nicene Christian Pasch De ratione paschali: The Paschal Tract of Anatolius, Bishop of Laodicea* (Dublin 2003) pp. 44–70 at 53. This tract was generally believed to be an Insular version of Anatolius's paschal tract, until Mc Carthy and Breen argued that it is the genuine work of Anatolius of Laodicea from the third century. Doubts remain and a scholarly consensus is yet to emerge; for present purposes it should suffice to state that Bede believed the text was authentic.

107 Columbanus had a similarly high regard for *De ratione paschali*, indicating its importance in the Insular World: *Epistola I*, ed. Walker, pp. 3–13.

108 Bede, *DTR* 30, line 60, ed. Jones: *quos calculandi esse peritissimos*.

109 See *Capitula* for the *Computus Hibernicus*, Jones, *BOT*, p. 393; *DRC* 42–43; *Munich Computus* 30 and 32–35. See also Walsh and Ó Cróinín, *DRC* 48, notes on line 4, p. 158.

110 See Kendall and Wallis's discussion of this chapter, pp. 171–72.

111 *DT* 8, lines 6–8. Cf. Bede's longer discussion in *DTR* 35.

112 *Munich Computus* 38, lines 39–43; and *DRC* 48. The author of *Munich* attempted to reconcile the belief that the solstices and equinoxes marked the mid-point of the seasons with the Irish tradition that the seasons began on the first day of February, May, August and November respectively. Warntjes suggests that only Irish *computistica* from the early eighth century addressed whether or not these dates did mark the mid-points of the seasons: *Munich Computus* 38, notes on lines 39–43, p. 108. See this chapter for a discussion of Irish quarter-days.

113 Cf. *DRC* 44–46; *Munich Computus* 31 and 36.

114 See further in Introduction.

115 *DRC* 46, line 6, ed. Ó Cróinín: *Sciendum nobis quid sit annus lunaris:. XXVIIII. dies et dimedius*. *Munich* 31 stated that there are three types of year and proceeds to describe eight; on the variation in types of year, see Warntjes, notes to line 14, p. 89.

116 *Munich Computus* 36. Bede dated the beginning of the Egyptian year to autumn without giving a specific date, *DT* 9, while *DRC* 45 says it took place at the autumnal equinox.

117 *Munich Computus* 36, line 6, ed. Warntjes: *Initium lunaris anni dubium esse fertur*.

118 See *DDT* 7; *DRC* 21; *Munich Computus* 7. See also the *Capitula* from the *Computus Hibernicus*, Jones, *BOT*, p. 393; Graff, Appendix 2, p. 139.

119 *DRC* 55–56; *Munich* 41, lines 21–28, 38–42 and 72–88. Cf. *Computus Einsidlensis*.

120 See Kendall and Wallis, *Bede: On the Nature of Things*, pp. 172–73, for discussion of Bede's examples.

121 *Munich Computus* 41, ed. Warntjes, p. 132.

122 *DRC* 52–53 and 55–58; *Munich* 41, on the bissextile day, is one of the longest chapters in the book extending to 110 lines. The bissextile is referred to in the *Capitula* for the *Computus Hibernicus*, Jones, *BOT*, p. 394; Graff, Appendix 2, p. 139. See also *Disputatio Chori et Praetextati*, lines 144–51 and 176–216.

123 Bede's *DTR* indicates that he was engaged in scientific observations, see Wallis, *Bede: The Reckoning of Time*, pp. 304–5.

124 Kendall and Wallis, *Bede: On the Nature of Things*, p. 173.

125 See Introduction. Dionysius Exiguus, *Letter to Petronius*, ed. Krusch, *Studien* II, pp. 63–68 at 63. Cf. Ambrose, *Epistula extra collectionem* 13, ed. M. Zelzer, *CSEL* 82 (Vienna 1982) pp. 222–34. See also Krusch, 'Die Einführung des griechischen Paschalritus im Abendlande,' pp. 106–7; Harrison, 'Episodes in the history,' pp. 307–19; Lejbowicz, 'Les Pâques Baptismales d'Augustin d'Hippone,' pp. 1–39; and Holford Strevens, 'Church politics and the Computus,' pp. 1–20.

126 See transcription by Graff in 'The recension of two Sirmond texts,' p. 134, note 40. The *Epistola Cyrilli*, ed. B. Krusch (Leipzig 1880) pp. 344–49 (and preserved in MS Bodley 309, item 21), argued for the angelic origins of the 19-year cycle; for discussion of this tradition, see Jones, 'A legend of St Pachomius,' pp. 198–210. The *Disputatio Morini* suggests Eusebius was the first to compose the 19-year cycle. See edition of Graff in 'The recension of two Sirmond texts,' Appendix 3, pp. 141–42. In *DTR* 44, Bede stated that Eusebius first devised this cycle and did not refer to the Synod of Nicaea.

127 See *DTR* 44 and 46 for a more comprehensive discussion of the workings of the 19-year cycle, in particular the 'ogdoad' and hendecad'.

128 Warntjes, Review of 'Kendall and Wallis: *Bede: On the Nature of Things*,' *The Medieval Review*, 12.08.01, where he identifies a similar treatment in *Computus Einsidlensis*, which was written before *De temporibus*, and the *Munich Computus* (Chapter 60), which was written after *De temporibus* but is indebted to earlier sources as discussed earlier.

129 See earlier, and Graff, 'The recension of two Sirmond texts,' pp. 117–25.

130 See further in Introduction.

131 *DRC* 106–13, ed. Ó Cróinín; *Munich Computus* 62, ed. Warntjes. See also *De comparatione epactarum Dionysii et Victorii*, ed. Warntjes. See Warntjes' comparison of *Computus Einsidlensis* with *Munich Computus* 62 in *Munich Computus*, pp. CXXXVI–CXXXVIII. The discrepancy between the Dionysian tables and astronomical reality was about 1.5 days in Bede's time and accounts for the misdating of the eclipse on 1 May to 3 May 664. Bede attempted to resolve this problem in *DTR* 43. See Jennifer Moreton, 'Doubts about the calendar: Bede and the eclipse of 664,' *Isis* 89.1 (1998) pp. 50–65; Kendall and Wallis, *Bede: On the Nature of Things*, pp. 174–75; and Warntjes, 'The Munich Computus,' pp. 36–37.

132 Cf. Isidore who also called the 95-year table a cycle: *Etymologiae*, 6.17.3–10, ed. Lindsay.

133 See Introduction for discussion of Easter calculations.

134 Krusch, *Studien* II, pp. 75–81. Warntjes argues that the sixteen 'Dionysian' *argumenta*, here edited by Krusch, and before him, by Jan (1718), taken from Digby 63,

should more properly be defined as a computistical formulary of AD 675, which he terms the *Computus Digbaeanus* of 675: this *computus* incorporated the original Dionysian algorithms, along with later additions introduced for the sake of clarity; see full discussion in I. Warntjes, 'The *Argumenta* of Dionysius Exiguus and their early recensions,' pp. 40–111. On converting indictions to incarnation years, see K. Harrison, *The Framework of Anglo-Saxon History, to AD 900* (Cambridge 1976) pp. 41 and 83–85.

135   Cf. for example, the dating clauses in the *Munich Computus* (41 and 62), which refer to the consulship of Vero and Bradua, taken from the Victorian table, and provide a date of AD 689, which enabled scholars to detect an unknown 'Victorian Computus of AD 689' as a source for *Munich*. It is the only surviving witness (to date) for this text.

136   Warntjes, 'The *Argumenta* of Dionysius Exiguus,' p. 93. He also notes that the Irish textbooks do not use the *Annus Domini* (these years are referred to once in *DRC* 103), or the concurrents, which are crucial for understanding the Dionysian formulas.

137   As the Irish computus textbooks do not use the Dionysian *argumenta*, but Bede did as early as 703, Warntjes suggests that the *Computus Digbaeanus* was compiled in an Anglo-Saxon centre; however, as there are links between this text and Irish *computistica*, he proposes it may have been an Anglo-Saxon centre in Ireland, such as Rath Melsigi: 'The *Argumenta* of Dionysius Exiguus,' pp. 93–94. Kendall and Wallis note that Bede departed from the Dionysian *argumenta* towards the end of this chapter when presenting formulas for calculating the epacts and concurrents for years into the future, p. 177.

138   See Kendall and Wallis, *Bede: On the Nature of Things*, pp. 177–78. See Chapter Five for further exploration of the nativity in Bede's thought.

139   See Kendall and Wallis, *Bede: On the Nature of Things*, p. 117, note 66.

140   For discussion of different chronological eras based on Scripture in Bede's thought, see Darby, *Bede and the End of Time*, pp. 24–28.

141   See Bede, *In Genesim*, 1 (1:14), ed. C.W. Jones, *CCSL* 118A (Turnhout 1967) pp. 15–16; *DTR* 6, ed. Jones, pp. 290–95.

142   See Kendall and Wallis, *Bede: On the Nature of Things*, p. 178.

143   *Etymologiae*, 5.37–39, ed. Lindsay.

144   *DRC* 59–60; and *Munich Computus*, pp. 42–43.

145   Graff, 'The recension of two Sirmond texts,' p. 117 and note 8.

146   Bede, *HE* 5:23, p. 560. *Annales Cambriae*, 768, ed. and tr. Morris, *Nennius*, p. 88.

147   For Felix's preface to his Easter tables, see Krusch, *Studien* II, pp. 86–87; and see Krusch, 'Die Einführung des griechischen Paschalritus im Abendlande,' pp. 114–15; and Cuppo, 'Felix of Squillace and the Dionysiac Computus I,' pp. 110–36 at 114–16.

148   *HE* 5:21, ed. and tr. Colgrave and Mynors, pp. 546–47.

149   For full explanation, see Warntjes, *Munich Computus*, Appendix 7.

150   Warntjes, p. 301, notes on lines 3–38.

151   See Introduction; the 19-year luni-solar cycle multiplied by the 28-year solar cycle equals 532 years, after which time all the calendrical data repeats in sequence.

152   See my 'Bede, Irish *Computistica* and *Annus Mundi*' for the influence of Victorian chronology on Irish *computistica*. For the potential longevity of Victorian tables, see M. Ohashi, 'The Easter table of Victorius of Aquitaine,' pp. 137–49.

153   The combination of solar and lunar cycles was known to Insular computists by the seventh century and is evident in Cummian's letter and ps-Augustine's *De mirabilibus sacrae scripturai*. See Ó Cróinín, notes to *DRC* 14, and *idem*., 'Early Irish annals from Easter tables: A case restated,' *Peritia* 2 (1983) pp. 74–86, and repr. in Ó Cróinín, *Early Irish History and Chronology*, pp. 76–86. Cf. *Computus Einsidlensis*, and Warntjes, *Munich Computus*, p. CXLIII.

154   The *Munich Computus* was written in 718/719, and the traditional view is that it was written on Iona to teach the community about the Dionysian Easter, which they had recently accepted (in 716). Immo Warntjes has conversely argued that the text was

written in southern Ireland before the first extension of Dionysius's table expired in AD 721. See *Munich Computus*, pp. LXXVII–XCVI.

155 On the cyclic character of 84-year tables, see Warntjes, 'The Munich Computus,' pp. 54–61.

156 Luke 3:1 and 3:21–3; and Warntjes, 'A newly discovered prologue of AD 699,' pp. 283–84. See further in Chapter Three.

157 Warntjes, 'A newly discovered prologue of AD 699,' p. 284.

158 See *De temporum ratione*, preface, lines 1–2, ed. Jones; and earlier.

159 Warntjes, *Munich Computus*, p. 311, note on lines 3–26; J. T. Palmer, 'Computus after the Paschal Controversy of AD 740,' in I. Warntjes and D. Ó Cróinín (eds.), *Easter Controversy* (Turnhout 2011) pp. 213–41 at 227–28. See further in Chapter Two.

2   The *De temporibus* chronicle

Chapter One introduced Bede's works on time and outlined the Insular context for the creation of Bede's *De temporibus*. As we have seen, the structure of *De temporibus* was influenced by earlier works, such as Isidore of Seville's *Eymologiae* and Irish computus texts like *De divisionibus temporum*. Isidore followed his discussion of all eight divisions of time with a short chronicle of universal history, which was an epitome of his earlier *Chronica Maiora*. Although Bede was clearly influenced by Isidore and his Irish sources, he significantly diverged from computistical tradition at this point: rather than treating the largest divisions of time, *saeculi* and *aetates* (generations and ages), as abstract concepts, he addressed them within the format of a world chronicle. The chronicle ran from Creation to Bede's *annus praesens*, AD 703, and comprises the last seven chapters of *De temporibus* (cc. 16–22), thus concluding the work.[1] Throughout this book I am using the term 'chronicle' for texts whose authors distinguished their chronicle-type works from other forms of writing: for example, Eusebius's and Bede's chronicle works but not their histories. The gap between chronicles and annals is narrower, as it is unclear if their compilers distinguished between these forms, and, at present, there is a lack of scholarly consensus on such nomenclature.[2]

As discussed in Chapter One, Bede's *De temporibus* has received little attention in modern scholarship, and the chronicle, traditionally referred to as the *Chronica Minora*, has suffered from an even greater neglect.[3] In 1935, Wilhelm Levison dismissed it as 'a survey which is rather poor in design and performance; the time of single events is not settled distinctly, the duration of generations and reigns is given only to make out the ages'.[4] Writing in the 1970s, Kenneth Harrison shared this view and extended it to the *Chronica Maiora*. He regarded both chronicles merely as 'companions' to Bede's works on time, rather than recognising that they are integral to Bede's treatment of time.[5] As the chronicle in *De temporibus* takes the place of a discussion of the two largest divisions of time, *saeculum* and *aetas*, excising these chapters leaves Bede's treatment of time incomplete. Similarly, the chronicle in *De temporum ratione* and the following chapters on eschatology are key to Bede's treatment of time in that work. Charles Jones, who did more than anyone to generate interest in Bede's works on time, omitted both (and the last five eschatological chapters of *De temporum ratione*) in his groundbreaking, *Bedae Opera de Temporibus*.[6] In his republication of *De temporibus* and *De*

temporum ratione in *Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina*, Jones re-printed Theodor Mommsen's editions of the chronicles from the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, *Chronica Minora* series, published in 1898.[7] Indeed, very little work has been done on Bede's chronicles since Mommsen, and when attention has been paid to them it has focussed on the considerably longer *De temporum ratione* chronicle.

That *De temporibus*, including its chronicle, was subsequently superseded by one of Bede's greatest achievements – *De temporum ratione* – should neither diminish it nor so effectively displace it in modern scholarship. It was contextualised in relation to developments in Insular *computistica* in Chapter One. This chapter examines the unusual structure of the chronicle and argues that Bede's critical engagement with his sources and wider Insular computistical tradition is again in evidence here, along with the influence of Scripture on his presentation of time. We will also consider the purpose of the chronicle in *De temporibus*, the potential significance of 703 as its date of completion and demonstrate that the traditional terminology and treatment of Bede's chronicles is misleading.

Structure of the *De temporibus* chronicle

As is well known, Bede's chronicle is based on the six ages of the World: *DT* 16 outlines this division and provides the length of each world age in generations and years; *DT* 17–22 treat each age individually in sequence. Bede's years are based on the Vulgate, which refers to the Latin translation of the Hebrew scriptures much of which had been translated by Jerome.[8] The age of the world is substantially shorter in the Hebrew than in the Greek scriptures, known as the Septuagint. World chronicles that counted time from Creation traditionally used the Septuagint's chronology. By the early eighth century the generally accepted date for the birth of Christ was AM 5199, following the view that his Passion occurred 5,228 years after Creation.[9] In contrast, because Bede used the Vulgate, he dated Christ's birth to AM 3952, which reduced the age of the world by 1,247 years. Bede did not attempt to hide the chronological differences between these biblical traditions, rather he highlighted the discrepancy by providing the length of each age according to the Hebrew and Septuagint at the beginning of the chapter dedicated to that age; however, he only presented the Vulgate reckoning in *DT* 16, which clearly indicated the tradition he preferred.[10] Bede's adoption of Vulgate chronology is the most remarked-upon element of his chronicle, indeed of *De temporibus* in general. The attention paid to the chronology is primarily based on the negative reaction to the work as evidenced in Bede's letter to Plegwin, written in 708, in which he assertively defended his chronology against a spurious charge of heresy.[11] This has led to much scholarship essentially reading the evidence backwards, as Bede's intentions in *De temporibus* are interpreted in the light of the later letter to Plegwin, which places undue emphasis on Bede's chronological choice.[12] In reality, the Vulgate chronology is not the most important element in the structure of the chronicle and has received a disproportionate amount of attention due to the later response to it. The key measures for understanding the

workings and purpose of *DT* 16–22 are *saeculi* and *aetates*, generations and ages, the largest of Bede's seven divisions of time.

As noted already, the chronicle in *De temporibus* replaces an abstract discussion of the two longest divisions of time. The meaning and relationship of *saeculi* and *aetates* to each other are somewhat unclear in computistical tradition. Isidore offered a very vague explanation of *saecula*: he suggested that *saeculum* comes from the verb 'to follow', *sequi*, because they follow one after the other, and added that some call a *saeculum* a period of 50 years, which was known to the Hebrews as a jubilee (*Etymologiae* 5.38).[13] Chapter one showed that the order of *saeculum* and *aetas* was often reversed in Irish sources: for example, in *De divisionibus temporum*, the *Munich Computus* and *De ratione conputandi*, *saeculum* was presented as greater than *aetas*.[14] The definition of *saeculum* remained problematic: the *Munich Computus* provided an unknown etymology that it came from cultivating differently (*secus colendo*), and suggested that *saeculum* contains the six ages of the world, or that it is an infinite number (c. 43). *De ratione conputandi* similarly regarded *saeculum* as an infinite number (c. 60). Bede differed from the Irish tradition in regarding *saeculum* as a division of time that was significantly shorter than *aetas*. Although he declined to define either term, it is clear from his treatment that *saeculum* was directly related to human lifespans and can be interpreted as generation, while *aetas* was age and can be understood in relation to the six ages of the world. This is key to understanding Bede's presentation of time in the first chronicle, as the work is structured on the human life cycle – whether human generations or regnal years depending on the context – and the six ages of the world.

Saeculum/saeculi and measuring time

The Vulgate chronology has received most of the scant attention paid to *De temporibus*, largely because of the letter to Plegwin and its reappearance with greater emphasis in Bede's second chronicle in *De temporum ratione*. Bede's world ages have also been considered and will be discussed shortly; however, *saeculi* (generations) have received very little attention. This may be in part because this division of time is less obvious in *DTR*, which dominates the historiography, and generations were also very rarely used in the chronicle tradition prior to Bede. Bede's use of *saeculi* here, once again, indicates his capacity to innovate within the chronicle tradition, and the influence of exegesis in his computus, as his main source is almost certainly Scripture.

In *DT* 16, Bede outlined how many generations were in each age of the world: ten in the first and second world ages; and 14 in the third, fourth and fifth ages. He concluded by saying: *Sexta, quae nunc agitur, nulla generationum uel temporum serie certa* ('The sixth Age, which is unfolding now, has no fixed sequence of generations or times').[15] This emphasis on generations is most unusual and the only earlier instances in the chronicle tradition in the west that I am aware of are in the *Liber Generationis* and Prosper of Aquitaine's *Chronicle*. The *Liber Generationis* is a version of the third-century world chronicle of Hippolytus translated from

Greek to Latin and extended to 334. It was preserved in the Roman *Chronograph of 354* and the Frankish Chronicle of Fredegar.[16] Prosper counted using generations just once in his chronicle: he noted there were ten generations from Adam to the Flood.[17] Generations may have been more common in Greek tradition, though Alan Samuel suggests that the practise was superseded by systems such as Olympiads and the Athenian archon lists, indicating they would have been archaic even by Hellenistic times.[18] Time is not recorded by generations in Eusebius-Jerome's chronicle, even though various chronological methods were introduced on different occasions, for example, the fifteenth year of Tiberius in Roman imperial years is synchronised with the chronicle's years from Abraham, key events in scripture such as the construction of Solomon's Temple, and regnal years of the Assyrian king, Ninus, and his queen, Semiramis.[19] However, Samuel has argued that there are traces of 23-year generations used as intervals in synchronising the first Olympiad years with the archons in Eusebius-Jerome, which may reflect early efforts to use the Olympiads for counting time in their sources.[20] Isidore did not count time in generations in his chronicles, and it is striking that Bede used generations, as well as years, to measure each world age.

It appears that Bede is looking to Scripture, specifically the opening of Matthew's gospel. In setting out Christ's genealogy, the evangelist counted time from Abraham in generations: *Omnes ergo generationes ab Abraham usque ad David generationes quattuordecim et a David usque ad transmigrationem Babylonis generationes quattuordecim et a transmigratione Babylonis usque ad Christum generationes quattuordecim* ('So all the generations, from Abraham to David are fourteen generations. And from David to the transmigration of Babylon are fourteen generations: and from the transmigration of Babylon to Christ are fourteen generations': Matt 1:17).[21] Bede referred to Matthew twice when outlining the length of the world ages in *DT* 16, noting that he began the generations with Abraham and the fourth age extends for 14 generations according to Matthew.[22] The importance of Matthew's construction of time for Bede is apparent again a few years later in his letter to Plegwin, which Bede wrote to defend his *De temporibus* chronicle. Bede drew attention to the opening of Matthew's gospel and observed that the evangelist identified the third through sixth ages of the world by measuring time using generations to demonstrate the orthodoxy of his chronicle.[23]

Bede was aware of anomalies in the presentation of Christ's genealogy, for example, between Matthew's and Luke's versions of Joseph's direct ancestry (Matt 1:15–16 and Luke 3:23–24), which he addressed in his commentary on Luke.[24] There was also a discrepancy between Matthew's gospel and the chronology of both the Vulgate and Septuagint for the fourth age of the world, that is, from David to the Babylonian Captivity. In the preface to the *De temporum ratione* chronicle, Bede observed that the fourth age had 17 generations but Matthew gave 14 for symbolic reasons, and Bede explained what these were in the relevant chronicle entry, noting Matthew excluded three generations from Christ's genealogy because of their crimes.[25] In prioritising the authority of scripture this further indicates that in matters of chronology and computus Bede's guiding principles were theology and scriptural exegesis.

The influence of Augustine of Hippo (AD 354–430) may also be significant here, as Faith Wallis has observed that Augustine often counted in generations rather than years when discussing the length of world ages.[26] In *De Genesi contra Manichaeos*, Augustine presented the number of generations in each age, and in the following chapter provided an allegorical explanation for why the five ages do not contain the same number of generations.[27] As in Bede, the first two ages have ten generations and the next three have 14. It has been suggested that Augustine may have been following Luke 3.34–38 for the first two ages and Matthew 1.17 for the next three.[28] While Augustine's influence in transmitting these ideas cannot be dismissed, the most important source for Bede seems to have been scripture itself.

Bede's association of *saeculi* with human generations in *De temporibus* distinguishes his divisions of time from his forebears, both Isidore and the Irish computistical tradition. Rather than simply explaining *saeculi*, Bede demonstrated its meaning by using generations as one of the main structuring features and methods of counting time in his chronicle. The other key structural feature of the chronicle is *aetates*, the six ages of the world.

Six ages of the world

The largest unit of time in Bede's seven divisions is *aetas* and all of world history is divided into six *aetates* in the *De temporibus* chronicle. This is most obviously influenced by the concept of six ages of the world, which in Christian thought were: (1) Adam to the Flood; (2) the Flood to Abraham; (3) Abraham to King David; (4) David to the Babylonian Captivity; (5) Babylonian Captivity to the Incarnation; and (6) Incarnation to the end of time. Isidore is regarded as the major influence on Bede here as he employed the six world ages' framework in both of his chronicles; however, we shall see that Bede's treatment is subtly different to Isidore's.[29]

Isidore is generally believed to have been the first to structure a universal chronicle on the six ages of the world, although this concept has its origins in Judaic hexaemeral tradition. The most influential Christian exponent of this hypothesis was Augustine of Hippo, who discussed the world ages several times. Augustine linked the six ages of the world with stages in the human life cycle, known as the six ages of man, and with the six days of Creation week. He occasionally brought all three ideas together, for example, in *De Genesi contra Manichaeos* (bk 1.23–24).[30] Isidore's understanding of the six ages was mediated to him through Augustine, who had delineated the world ages by reference to major events in the Judaeo-Christian historical consciousness, as outlined previously, all from Scripture. We have seen that Matthew's gospel divided the time between Abraham and Christ by highlighting King David and the Babylonian captivity, which later marked divisions between the world ages. These events were important chronological markers in world chronicles before the world ages' framework was systematically applied to universal time, as can be seen in Prosper of Aquitaine's chronicle.[31]

As noted, Isidore was the first to incorporate the world ages explicitly within a world chronicle, and he also highlighted the link between the six days of Creation

and six ages by beginning both chronicles with a brief recapitulation of the hexameron from Genesis 1. After recounting the creation of living creatures and Adam on the sixth day, Isidore changed to the chronicle format and presented all subsequent events and years under the world ages.[32] Isidore's presentation already differed from his major chronological predecessors because of the world ages framework – incorporating the Creation story as a prelude served to further underline this difference in emphasis. There is nothing comparable in the chronicle of Eusebius-Jerome, which begins with Abraham, or Prosper of Aquitaine, whose chronicle opens with Adam begetting Seth at the age of 230 without any narrative preliminaries.[33] For a time, Isidore's chronographic writings received little attention because he had been regarded as an 'unreflective regurgitator of ancient learning', but more recent work has recognised that he both summarised and augmented the works of Eusebius-Jerome and their continuators.[34] In structuring his chronicle on the six ages of the world and beginning with the hexameron, Isidore underlined an explicitly theological construction of history in chronography.

The six world ages provide the largest structuring feature of Bede's first chronicle, indicating Isidore's influence on him. However, just as Isidore's chronicles are often seen as derivative, this attribution has also overshadowed Bede's originality, especially as Bede's independence from Isidore is apparent from the outset. Bede began the chronicle by setting out the six ages and noting how many generations and years were in each (*DT* 16). Bede also likened each age to stages in the human life cycle, no doubt influenced by Augustine, as he explained the First Age: *quae tota periit diluuio, sicut infantiam mergere solet obliuio* ('perished completely in the Flood, just as infancy is wont to be submerged in oblivion').[35] Unlike Isidore, Bede did not refer to the hexameron and ignored the lengthy tradition of equating the world ages with Creation week, preferring the ages of man analogy. Bede's later works reveal his familiarity with the association of Creation week and the world ages, and he discussed this concept at length in *De temporum ratione* 10, but paid more attention to the ages of man in the opening of the *DTR* chronicle (c. 66).[36]

It is clear that Bede was familiar with the association of the world ages and Creation week in *De temporum ratione*, and this also appears in several of his later works; nevertheless, he underplayed the link between the world ages and Creation week in the second chronicle. It is possible, then, that he was also aware of the link between the world ages and Creation week when writing in 703 and similarly elected not to make this connection. He appears to have been familiar with Augustinian ideas, and very possibly knew *De Genesi contra Manichaeos*, in which Augustine brought together the ages of man, Creation week and world ages.[37] Bede's reticence may stem from concerns about contemporary apocalypticism, specifically the belief that the world was in the final years of the sixth age and therefore close to the end of time. Bede's letter to Plegwin indicates such sentiments were expressed in Northumbria in the early eighth century.[38] He may have been concerned that a clear association between the six ages and the six days of Creation would exacerbate such beliefs and, in particular, fuel the concept of the 'millennial week'. This derived from an overly literal interpretation of Psalm 89.4: 'For a thousand years in thy sight are as yesterday, which is past'

(*quia mille anni in oculis tuis sicut dies hesterna quae pertransiit*); and 2 Peter 3.8: 'that one day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day' (*quia unus dies apud Dominum sicut mille anni et mille anni sicut dies unus*). The conclusion reached when equating the six days of Creation with the six ages of the world appears to be that, as each world age was 1,000 years, the world would end in AM 6000, an idea that was articulated at least as early as the *Epistle of Barnabas* (written c. 70–132).[39] This concern may have been especially relevant in Bede's time, as, according to the *Anno Mundi* chronology widely used in the Insular World, Bede's *De temporibus* was written in AM 5904, that is 96 years before the proposed end of the world.[40] Bede's opposition to such attitudes has been much rehearsed in historiography and may explain why he preferred the ages of man analogy in his world chronicles.[41]

Bede's *De temporibus* chronicle differs from its predecessors in the chronicle tradition, including Isidore, despite the apparent similarities with the *Etymologiae*. And, as we have seen, he also differed from computistical tradition in not defining the largest units of time, *saeculum* and *aetas*, instead preferring to address both in a chronicle format. This raises the question of why Bede deviated from these traditions in both replacing an abstract discussion of the largest units of time with a world chronicle and incorporating a chronicle based on generations and ages within a computus.

Purpose of the *De temporibus* chronicle

Isidore's *Etymologiae* is generally regarded as the major influence on Bede, and it is clearly an important source but, as noted, Bede differed from Isidore in several key ways. A more important, though for the most part unacknowledged, influence on Bede may be a presentation of universal history, known as the 'Twelve cycles of the World', and represented in the final chapter (68) of the *Munich Computus*. While the *Munich computus* is dated to AD 718/9, and therefore post-dates *De temporibus*, it contains sections of an earlier computus that can be dated to AD 689, and Immo Warntjes has convincingly argued that the last six chapters were taken from the earlier work (63–68).[42] The framework of history, which will be referred to as the 'twelve cycles', divides historical time into 12 segments of 532-years, based on the great Easter cycle in which – following the Julian calendar – all solar and lunar data repeat exactly after 532 years. When synchronised with *Anno Mundi* chronology based on the Septuagint, an *annus praesens* in the seventh century falls in the twelfth cycle. This view of time, as it appears in the Insular World, came from the Easter reckoning of Victorius of Aquitaine. Victorius's Easter table ran for 532 years, after which time the dates of Easter repeat exactly; the enduring nature of this table was its greatest attribute during the seventh-century debates about Easter calculations.[43] The *Munich computus* was written in support of the Dionysian Easter, but the last chapters of the work argue for the pre-eminence of the Victorian reckoning because the computist made much use of a Victorian computus from 689; the 'twelve cycles' in the final chapter is in keeping with this Victorian view of time. The earliest known synchronisation of great cycles with historical time in the Insular World is contained within

pseudo-Augustine's *De mirabilibus sacrae scripturae*, which dates to the mid-seventh century. The similarities between this text and the later version in Munich have been highlighted, and it appears this method of measuring universal time was reasonably familiar in Ireland.[44] As we know that Bede received much of his computistical knowledge from Ireland, it is eminently plausible that he had encountered the 'twelve cycles' view of time.[45]

Bede's *De temporibus* chronicle is, of course, in many respects very different to the 'twelve cycles'. As frequently observed, it is based on generations and ages as opposed to 12 532-year cycles. However, the presentation of universal time in the lost Victorian computus, or another source like it, may have influenced Bede in his decision to incorporate an overarching framework of time within a computus. The 'twelve cycles' may have been intended to further the argument that the Victorian Easter reckoning is a true cycle which endures until the end of time, in contrast to the 95-year Dionysian Easter table, which had been attacked in the work's previous chapter. As we have seen, Bede was familiar with attacks on the Dionysian reckoning and successfully proved that the Dionysian Easter was a true cycle in his discussion of the concurrent in *DT* 13.[46] His decision to include a chronicle within *De temporibus* may also, at least in part, have been intended to supersede Victorian reckonings of universal time based on the 12 cycles.

Bede's chronicle presents a vision of time that is directly linear rather than cyclical because it is structured on the six unequal ages of the world, rather than the 'twelve cycles' orderly division of time into equal parts, and follows successive generations from Adam to the present day. The chronicle also presents a shorter span of universal time because Bede used the Vulgate rather than the Septuagint when calculating years. However, despite the non-cyclical nature of the Dionysian Easter table then in use, Bede's chronicle is linked to Easter cycles because *De temporibus* was completed and its chronicle terminates in AD 703, the first year of the last 19-year cycle in the first extension of the Dionysian table. Dionysius's original Easter table ran from AD 532–626 inclusively, and a continuation was prepared by Felix Gillitanus in 616, which ran from 627–721 inclusively (see Table 2.1). Indeed, some Easter tables based on Dionysian principles kept different AD limits – for example, the table that may have belonged to Willibrord, which was brought from Rath Melsigi and survives in a continental manuscript, ran from AD 684 to AD 702 inclusive, that is, one complete Dionysian 19-year cycle.[47] As discussed in Chapter One, AD 703 was a vibrant year in computistical studies and various tracts and treatises used it as a base point for Easter calculations and continental annals.[48]

Table 2.1 Dionysius's Easter table and its first extension by AD years

Dionysius's Easter reckoning	*Dionysian table*	*1st extension*
1st 19-year cycle	AD 532–550	AD 627–645
2nd 19-year cycle	AD 551–569	AD 646–664
3rd 19-year cycle	AD 570–588	AD 665–683
4th 19-year cycle	AD 599–607	AD 684–702
5th 19-year cycle	AD 608–626	AD 703–721

Against this backdrop *De temporibus* takes on added importance. James Palmer has argued that Bede's early works on time (*De natura rerum*, *Expositio Apocalypseos*, and *De temporibus*) are part of a 'lively and international debate about Easter tables and chronology'.[49] The early eighth-century certainly shows evidence of all forms of chronological activities, and 703 is the start-point for various Easter tables and annals. Indeed, the major difference between Bede's work and several contemporary sources is that 703 is their first year while it is the last year in Bede's chronicle, as signalled at the beginning of the final chapter: *DT* 22. The coincidence of the year is unlikely, and it is most probable that Bede wrote *De temporibus* to coincide with the beginning of the last 19-year cycle in the current Dionysian table, not least because of the widespread recognition that a new extension to the Easter tables would soon be needed. Bede's chronicle concludes *De temporibus* by presenting an over-arching framework of time – from Creation to the end which is known to God alone – that is built upon the largest two divisions of time: generations and ages. It is securely integrated within the text. If excised from it (as is the case in the otherwise superb edition of Charles Jones, *Bedae Opera de Temporibus*)[50] the reader receives an incomplete discussion of the units of time. If Bede also wished to challenge representations of time such as the 'twelve cycles', which are explicitly based on 532-year Easter cycles, he may have terminated his chronicle in the computistically significant year of 703 to integrate his linear framework of time with his chosen Easter reckoning. Although Bede's inclusion of a chronicle in *De temporibus* may have been influenced by Irish *computistica*, his decision to replace an abstract discussion of *saeculum* and *aetas* with the broad sweep of universal history means his chronicle performs a significantly different function.

This chapter has offered a new assessment of the structure and purpose of the final chapters of *De temporibus*. Before examining the content of the *De temporibus* chronicle and its place in world chronicle tradition in the next two chapters, a brief comment on the traditional treatment of Bede's chronicles is required to demonstrate the unsuitability of the current terminology and titles.

Terminology and titles for Bede's chronicles

The *De temporibus* chronicle is nowadays generally known as the *Chronica Minora* ('the lesser chronicle') as noted at the outset of this chapter, a designation that has been deliberately avoided throughout this book. The chronicle in *De temporum ratione* (c. 66) is, in comparison, called the *Chronica Maiora* ('the greater chronicle'). However, these are not Bede's titles, and they emerge quite late in the transmission and history of these works.[51] Joseph Stevenson included the *DTR* chronicle in his *Venerabilis Bedae: opera historica minora* (London 1841), a collection concerned with English history that included an appendix of related texts.[52] Stevenson did not refer to Bede's first chronicle and presented excerpts from *DTR* 66, which he referred to as Bede's 'Chronicon', under the title *De sex hujus seculi aetatibus*. J.A. Giles included both of Bede's works on time in Volume 6 of his 12-volume, *The Complete Works of the Venerable Bede* (London 1843). He noted that *De temporum ratione* was also called *De Temporibus Liber Major*, and that in some editions Chapters 66 and 67 were printed separately

under the title *Chronicon sive de sex Ætatibus Sæculi*: the first chronicle did not receive special treatment.[53] Both chronicles were also published by J.P. Migne in *Patrologia Latina*, Volume 90: *De temporibus*, cols 277–92C; and *De temporum ratione*, cols 293–578D. *De temporum ratione* 66 was called *Chronicon sive de sex hujus saeculi aetatibus*, while Bede's first chronicle was not given a title.

Theodor Mommsen's edition of Bede's chronicles offers the earliest identified usage of the terms *Chronica Minora* and *Maiora*. In the third of his *Chronica Minora* volumes the texts are presented as *Bedae: Chronica Maiora, AD A. DCCXXV, eiusdem Chronica Minora, AD A. DCCIII*.[54] These editions became and have remained the authoritative versions of Bede's chronicles, and their nomenclature has consequently also endured. When Jones re-used Mommsen's edition of the chronicles in his CCSL volume, he also reproduced Mommsen's titles. He inserted a page break between Chapters 65 and 66 of *DTR* to clearly signal the beginning of the *Chronica Maiora*, and at the beginning of *De temporibus*, he acknowledged that it contained the *Chronica Minora* (i.e., Chapters 17–22) from Mommsen.

As the standard designations for Bede's chronicles, the titles *Chronica Maiora* and *Chronica Minora* indicate their close association in modern scholarship. However, calling Bede's first chronicle *Minora*, along with its presentation at the foot of the page in Mommsen's edition and chronologically matched to the *Chronica Maiora*, has been a factor in the text's disregard. This has formed an assumption that both chronicles contain the same basic material, merely presented in a very limited way in the first, and consequently the earlier one has not been studied in its own right. The nomenclature of *minora* and *maiora* also misrepresents the relationship between Bede's chronicles. The titles have almost certainly been influenced by Isidore of Seville's two chronicles, which are frequently referred to as *Chronica maiora* and *minora*. Isidore's lesser chronicle was contained in his *Etymologiae* and is an epitome of the *Chronica Maiora*, specifically the second redaction.[55] In contrast, however, Bede's shorter chronicle was written first, so the relationship between his so-called *minora* and *maiora* is incompatible with Isidore's chronicles. Bede's *Maiora* adds considerably more information, and is, in many respects, much more in keeping with the chronicle tradition than his first effort, but as *Minora* was written first – and is therefore not an epitome of *Maiora* – it needs to be considered separately.[56]

In order to avoid the pejorative implications of calling Bede's first chronicle the *Chronica minora*, this volume has avoided that title throughout, preferring, up until now, to describe it as the *De temporibus* chronicle or Bede's first chronicle. However, based on the significance of AD 703 as the termination date of the chronicle and its broader computistical significance, if a separate title for the chronicle is required I propose calling it the 'Chronicle of 703'.[57] By extension, the second chronicle, which we will turn to in Chapter Four, will be called the 'Chronicle of 725', when a separate title is required. Designating *De temporibus* 16–22, the 'Chronicle of 703' will better serve the work than its old title in several ways. It breaks the link with Isidore, which is important, as Bede's first chronicle was properly integrated into a computus as part of the discussion of the divisions of time, unlike Isidore's chronicle in the *Etymologiae*; Bede's first chronicle is structured very differently to Isidore's, as we have seen; and the relationship

between Bede's two chronicles is the inverse of the relationship between Isidore's *Chronica minora* and *Chronica maiora*. And highlighting the year, AD 703, is intended to remind readers of the work's computistical context by signalling the chronicle's association with important contemporary developments in Easter tables and chronological records in the early medieval world at this time.

The 'Chronicle of 703' has a clear purpose in *De temporibus* and marks a development in the creation of computus textbooks, one that Bede further enhanced in *De temporum ratione*. The next chapter will assess the *Anno Mundi* chronology of the 'Chronicle of 703' and analyse its place in world chronicle tradition.

Notes

1 *DT* 16, *De Mundi Aetatibus* ('The Ages of the World'), in included in the *De temporibus* chronicle in this book. Mommsen began the chronicle with *DT* 17, which outlines the first age, ed. T. Mommsen, *MGH Auctores antiquissimi* 13, *Chronica Minora* 3 (Berlin 1898) pp. 247–321 in notes; repr. in *De temporibus* [*DT*], ed. C.W. Jones, *CCSL* 123C (Turnhout 1980) pp. 601–11. *DT* 1–16 was first edited by Charles Jones in *Bedae Opera de Temporibus* [herafter *BOT*] pp. 295–303, and repr. in Jones, *CCSL* 123C, pp. 585–601.

2 See R.R. Newton, *Medieval Chronicles and the Rotation of the Earth* (Baltimore and London 1972) pp. 43–62; M. McCormick, *Les Annales du haut moyen âge*, Typologie des sources du moyen âge occidental, fasc. 14 (Turnhout 1975) esp. pp. 11–21; D. Dumville, 'What is a chronicle?' in E. Kooper (ed.), *The Medieval Chronicle II: Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on the Medieval Chronicle Dreibergen/ Utrecht 16–21 July 1999* (Amsterdam and New York 2002) pp. 1–27; S. Foot, 'Annals and Chronicles in Western Europe,' in S. Foot and C.F. Robinson (eds.), *The Oxford History of Historical Writing, Volume 2: 400–1400* (Oxford 2012) pp. 346–67; R.W. Burgess and M. Kulikowski, *Mosaics of Time: The Latin Chronicle Traditions from the First Century BC to the Sixth Century AD, Vol. 1, A Historical Introduction to the Chronicle Genre from Its Origins to the High Middle Ages* (Turnhout 2013) pp. 1–62; Ian Wood, 'Universal chronicles in the early medieval West,' *Medieval Worlds* 1 (2015) pp. 47–60.

3 See pp. 56–8 for discussion of the terminology used for Bede's chronicles.

4 W. Levison, 'Bede as Historian,' in A. Hamilton Thompson (ed.), *Bede: His Life, Times and Writings* (Oxford 1935) pp. 111–51 at 116.

5 Harrison, *The Framework of Anglo-Saxon History*, p. 76. Cf. also Richard Shaw, who has been similarly negative about both chronicles: Richard Shaw, *The Gregorian Mission to Kent in Bede's Ecclesiastical History: Methodology and Sources* (New York, NY 2018) p. 23 and note 13.

6 Jones, *BOT*, in which *De temporum ratione* stops at Chapter 65, and *De temporibus* with Chapter 16. Jones did include Bede's *Epistola ad Pleguinam* (pp. 305–15) and *Epistola ad Wicthedum* (pp. 317–25); and excerpts from an Irish computus found in Oxford MS Bodleian 309, fol. 62 (pp. 393–95), part of what is now known as the *Sirmond Computus*; see Chapter One. Jones echoed Levison's view on the *Chronica minora*, and, like Harrison, said this equally applied to the *Chronica maiora*: C.W. Jones, *Saints' Lives and Chronicles in Early England* (Ithaca, NY 1947) p. 22.

7 Mommsen, *MGH Auctores antiquissimi* 13, *Chronica Minora* 3, pp. 247–321. *DT* 17–22, ed. Jones; *De temporum ratione* [*DTR*], ed. C.W. Jones, *CCSL* 123 B (Turnhout 1977).

8 On the development of what is now called the Vulgate, see P.-M. Bogaert, 'The Latin Bible,' in J.C. Paget and J. Schaper (eds.), *The New Cambridge History of the Bible, Vol. 1, from the Beginnings to 600* (Cambridge 2013) pp. 505–26, and *idem*., 'The Latin Bible, *c*. 600 to *c*. 900,' in R. Marsden and E.A. Matter (eds.), *The New Cambridge History of the Bible, Vol. 2, from 600 to 1450* (Cambridge 2012) pp. 69–92.

9 See Chapter Three for a survey of the chronological systems used in world chronicles, discussion of the traditional reasons for preferring the Septuagint and Bede's place in the world chronicle tradition.

10 *De temporibus* 17, 18, 20, i.e., the first, second and fourth world ages; the Hebrew and Greek traditions share the same chronological data for the third age, and the fifth is based upon imperial reigns (the Persians, Alexander the Great and the Ptolemaic dynasty and Julius Caesar), while the sixth age runs to the *annus praesens*.

11 On the letter to Plegwin, see Darby, *Bede and the End of Time*, pp. 35–64; *idem*., 'Bede's time shift of 703 in context,' in V. Wieser, C. Zolles, C. Feik, M. Zolles, and L. Schlöndorff. (eds.), *Abendländische Apokalyptik: Kompendium zur Genealogie der Endzeit* (Berlin 2013) pp. 619–40.

12 See Chapter Three for further discussion and M. MacCarron, Bede, *Annus Mundi* and Irish *computistica*,' *Early Medieval Europe* 23.3 (2015) pp. 290–307 at 301–7.

13 Isidore, *Etymologiae*, ed. W.M. Lindsay (Oxford 1911); tr. S.T. Barney *et al*. (Cambridge 2006) p. 130.

14 See Chapter One and Graff, 'The recension of two Sirmond texts', pp. 112–42 at 120.

15 *DT* 16, lines 20–21, *CCSL* 123C, p. 601; tr. Kendall and Wallis, *Bede: On the Nature of Things*, p. 118.

16 *Chronograph of 354*, ed. T. Mommsen, *MGH* A.A. 9, *Chronica Minora*, 1 (Munich 1981) pp. 39–148. See M.R. Salzman, *On Roman Time: The Codex-Calendar of 354 and the Rhythms of Urban Life in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, Los Angeles; and Oxford 1990). The evidence indicates that the *Liber Generationis* and a composite Eusebius-Jerome-Hydatius chronicle were being transmitted together from the late fifth century onwards, which may explain how 'Fredegar' received it; see R. Collins, *Die Fredegar-Chroniken*, *MGH Studien und Texte*, 44 (Hannover 2007) pp. 27–29 and Chapter Three for discussion. If such a text was circulating in seventh-century Francia, it is plausible that Bede could have come across a version of the *Liber Generationis*.

17 Prosper, *Epitoma Chronicon*, ed. T. Mommsen, *MGH A.A*., 9, *Chronica Minora*, 1 (Munich 1981) pp. 385–485 at 386.

18 A.E. Samuel, *Greek and Roman Chronology: Calendars and Years in Classical Antiquity* (Munich 1972) pp. 241–45: the difficulty for historians attempting to use generational reckonings is that the length of the generation varied in antiquity depending on who was recording events and for what purpose.

19 Eusebius-Jerome, *Chronicon*, book 2, ed. R. Helm, *Griechische Christliche Schriftsteller* (Berlin 1956) pp. 173–74. See further in Chapter Three for discussion of Tiberius XV in this chronicle. Eusebius's original work has been lost: book two survives in Jerome's translation, and book one in an Armenian recension. See Burgess and Kulikowski, *Mosaics of Time*, pp. 119–31. J.N.D. Kelly, *Jerome: His Life, Writings, and Controversies* (New York, NY 1975) pp. 68–75.

20 Samuel, *Greek and Roman Chronology*, p. 243.

21 Augustine cited Matthew in *De Civitate Dei*, 22.30, ll. 130–5, ed. B. Dombert and A. Kolb, *De Civitate Dei, Libri XI – XXII*, *CCSL* 48 (Turnhout 1955) p. 865.

22 Generations are used for counting time on other occasions in scripture, see Genesis 15:16, 50:22; Exodus 20:5; Numbers 14:18; Deuteronomy 5:9, 23:2–3 and 8, 23:8; IV Kings 10:30, 15:12; Tobit 9:11, 14:15; Job 42:16; Psalm 108:13; Baruch 6:2.

23 *Epistola ad Pleguinam*, ed. C.W. Jones, *CCSL* 123C (Turnhout 1980) pp. 617–26: section 2. See Chapter Three for the controversy surrounding Bede's *De temporibus* chronicle and his reaction in the letter to Plegwin.

24 *In Lucam*, I, ll. 2689–2724, ed. D. Hurst, *CCSL* 120 (Turnhout 1960) pp. 87–88. Cf. Ambrose, *Expositio evangelii secundum Lucam* 3.12–17, ed. M. Adriaen, *CCSL* 14 (Turnhout 1957) pp. 82–85.

25 *DTR* 66, preface, lines 29–33, and *s.a.* 3065, lines 452–55, ed. Jones. See Chapter Four for discussion of developments in Bede's thought between *De temporibus* and *De temporum ratione*.

26 Wallis, *Bede: The Reckoning of Time*, p. 357.

27 See Augustine, *De Genesi contra Manichaeos*, book 1.23–24, ed. D. Weber, *CSEL* 91 (Vienna 1998) pp. 104–12; *De Civitate Dei*, 22.30, ll. 124–38, ed. Dombert and Kolb, pp. 865–66; *De Diversis Quaestionibus* LXXXIII, 58.2, ll. 61–72, ed. A. Mutzenbecher, *CCSL* 44A (Turnhout 1975) pp. 106–7.

28 See Augustine, *On Genesis Against the Manichees*, book 1.24, tr. R.J. Teske, *Fathers of the Church – A New Translation* 84 (Washington 1991) p. 88, note 122.

29 Isidore, *Chronica maiora*, ed. J.C. Martín, *CCSL* 112 (Turnhout 2003); *Etymologiae*, 5.38–39, ed. Lindsay, tr. Barney et al., pp. 130–33. See the most recent translation of *De temporibus* by Kendall and Wallis, especially the footnotes for the chronicle, which indicate Bede's borrowings from Isidore; Chapter Four analyses Bede's relationship with Isidore in this chronicle and argues that Jerome's translation of Eusebius's chronicle was more important for the second chronicle.

30 Ed. Weber, pp. 104–12; cf. Augustine, *De Diversis Quaestionibus* LXXXIII, 58.2, ed. Mutzenbecher, pp. 105–7. See P. Archambault, 'The ages of man and the ages of the world: A study of two traditions,' *Revue des Études Augustiniennes* 12 (1966) pp. 193–228 at 205; E. Sears, *The Ages of Man: Medieval Interpretations of the Life Cycle* (Princeton, NJ 1986); J.A. Burrow, *The Ages of Man: A Study in Medieval Writing and Thought* (Oxford 1988); Darby, *Bede and the End of Time*, pp. 22–23.

31 Prosper, *Epitoma Chronicon*, 28 and 57, ed. Mommsen, pp. 386 and 388.

32 Isidore, *Chronica Maiora*, 3, ed. Martín, pp. 8–9; *Etymologiae* 5.38–39.

33 Prosper, *Epitoma Chronicon*, 1, ed. Mommsen, p. 385. See Chapter Three for discussion of Eusebius-Jerome.

34 S. Koon and J. Wood, 'The *Chronica Maiora* of Isidore of Seville,' *e-Spania* 6 [En ligne] (2008) (http://e-spania.revues.org/15552), quotation at section 7.

35 *DT* 16, lines 4–5, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 600; tr. Kendall and Wallis, *Bede: On the Nature of Things*, p. 117. On Bede and Augustine regarding the six ages of the world, see C.W. Jones, 'Some introductory remarks on Bede's commentary on Genesis,' *Sacris Erudiri* 19 (1969-70) pp. 115–98 at 157–58 and 191–98.

36 See Wallis, *The Reckoning of time*, pp. 280 and 354, who noted that Bede opted to treat the World Ages twice in *De temporum ratione*, once as a type of week (*DTR* 10) and the second time as the extension of the Great Paschal Cycle (*DTR* 66).

37 Charles Jones identifies it as a possible source for *DT* 16: *BOT*, p. 303. Kendall and Wallis suggest that Bede may have borrowed from this text in *De natura rerum*, often regarded as a companion to the *De temporibus* (see Chapter One): *De natura rerum* [*DNR*], 25, ed. C.W. Jones, *CCSL* 123A (Turnhout 1975), pp. 173–234: tr. Kendall and Wallis, *Bede: On the Nature of Things*, p. 89.

38 *Epistola ad Pleguinam*, sections 14–15. See Chapter Three for discussion of Bede's letter to Plegwin. On Bede and apocalyptic thought, see Darby, *Bede and the End of Time*; and MacCarron, 'Bede, Irish *comptutistica* and *Annus mundi*'.

39 *Epistle of Barnabas* 15.4, ed. and tr. B.D. Erhman in *The Apostolic Fathers, Vol. 2, Loeb Classical Library* 25 (Cambridge 2003) pp. 12–84 at 68–69. See Jones, 'Some introductory remarks,' p. 192.

40 For discussion of the *Anno Mundi* chronology most commonly used in the Insular World, see MacCarron, 'Bede, Irish *computistica* and *Annus Mundi*'. For more on the 'millennial week,' see Darby, *Bede and the End of Time*, p. 40. The differing lengths of the world ages appears not to have concerned proponents of this view. See Augustine,

De Genesi contra Manichaeos, 1:24, ed. Weber, pp. 111–12, for discussion of the dif-
ference in length of the world ages.

41 See *Epistola ad Pleguinam*, *De temporum ratione* 67–71; Darby, *Bede and the End of Time*, pp. 35–64; and MacCarron, 'Bede, Irish *computistica* and *Annus Mundi*'.

42 See Warntjes, *Munich Computus*, esp. pp. LVII–LVIII and CXXIV–CXXVI; and Chapter One for discussion of Irish *computistica*.

43 See Chapter One.

44 See ps-Augustine (also known as Augustinus Hibernicus), *De mirabilibus sacrae scripturae*, bk 2.4, *PL* 35.2149–200 at 2175–76. On similarities between ps-Augustine and *Munich* 68, see Warntjes, *Munich Computus*, notes on pp. 314–15, and MacCarron, 'Bede, Irish *computistica* and *Annus mundi*,' pp. 299–300.

45 Great cycles appear to have been correlated with historical time in the Eastern Empire more commonly than in the west. See C.P.E. Nothaft, *Dating the Passion: The Life of Jesus and the Emergence of Scientific Chronology (200–1600)* (Leiden 2012) pp. 58–64. For further discussion of Bede's possible knowledge of the 'twelve cycles,' see MacCarron, 'Bede, Irish *computistica* and *Annus mundi*,' pp. 301–3.

46 See Chapter One, pp. 37–8.

47 Paris, BN, lat. 10837, fol. 44r. Additional Easter cycles were subsequently added to this manuscript, see fols 40v–41v. On this Easter table, see D. Ó Cróinín, 'Rath Melsigi, Willibrord and the earliest Echternach manuscripts,' *Peritia* 3 (1984) pp. 17–49, repr. in Cróinín, *Early Irish History and Chronology*, pp. 145–72; and Warntjes, *Munich Computus*, XC–XCI and note 242. See Chapter Six for Willibrord.

48 See J.T. Palmer, 'The ends and futures of Bede's *De temporum ratione*,' in P. Darby and F. Wallis (eds.), *Bede and the Future* (Farnham 2014) pp. 139–60 at 142–43 and note 13. See also London, British Library, Cotton Caligula A XV fol. 110r–117v; for discussion see Warntjes, *Munich computus*, pp. 311 and 337–38, Palmer, 'Computus after the Paschal Controversy of AD 740,' pp. 213–31 at 227–28, and C.W. Jones, 'Two Easter tables,' *Speculum* 13 (1938) pp. 204–5. On Frankish Annals beginning in AD 703, see J. Story, 'The Frankish Annals of Lindisfarne and Kent,' *Anglo-Saxon England* 34 (2005) pp. 59–109.

49 Palmer, 'The ends and futures,' p. 143.

50 See further in this chapter for discussion.

51 For discussion of the manuscript transmission of *De temporibus* see Chapter One, and further in Kendall and Wallis, 'Introduction,' in *Bede: On the Nature of Things*, pp. 43–44 and 56–68; and Lapidge, 'Beda Venerabilis,' pp. 44–135. For the first printed editions, see Jones, *Bedae Pseudepigrapha*, pp. 5–19.

52 The collection includes: Bede's metrical and prose *Lives* of Cuthbert, *Historia abbatum*, excerpts from the *DTR* chronicle, and Bede's letter to Egbert; in addition, the appendix contains, among other items, Bede's letter to Abbot Albinus, relevant letters from the register of Gregory the Great, and the anonymous *Lives* of Cuthbert and Ceolfrith. *DTR* has an equally rich history in print as in manuscripts, with three editions appearing in the sixteenth century alone; see Jones, *BOT*, p. VII; and Wallis, *Bede: The Reckoning of Time*, pp. XCVII–XCIX.

53 Giles, *Complete Works of the Venerable Bede*, Vol. 6, pp. V–VI.

54 Mommsen, *Chronica Minora* 3, p. 223.

55 See J.C. Martín, 'Introduction,' *Chronica maiora*, *CCSL* 112 (Turnhout 2003) pp. 119–242 on the two redactions of this chronicle. J. Fontaine also argued for two redactions of the *Chronica maiora* but dated these to AD 616 and 629: *Isidore de Séville: Genèse et originalité de la culture hispanique au temps des Wisigoths* (Turnhout 2000) p. 224. See also Koon and Wood, 'The *Chronica Maiora* of Isidore of Seville'.

56 The relationship between both chronicles will be examined in Chapter Four.

57 I am grateful to the audience at the Institute of Historical Research's Earlier Middle Ages seminar (February 2015), the participants at the *Sixth International conference on the Science of Computus* at Galway in July 2016, and Jo Story and Peter Darby for

discussion of my proposed title for Bede's first chronicle. While one could argue that a separate title is unnecessary because the chronicle is not a separate work (a fact I have asserted throughout this chapter because *DT* 16–22 are integral to the aims and intentions of the overall work) as those chapters have been disseminated independently of the rest of *De temporibus* for many centuries, and the chronicle is most commonly known under a separate title, I believe an independent title will be useful in certain contexts, and a title other than *Chronica minora* is required if the *De temporibus* chronicle is to be appreciated on its own merits.

3   Bede's *Anno Mundi* chronology and the 'Chronicle of 703'

Bede's *De temporibus* chronicle differs markedly from its predecessors in the world chronicle tradition. This is primarily due to its unusual structure and inclusion in a computus, where it was successfully integrated into a discussion of the divisions of time, specifically generations and ages (see Chapter Two). Despite the unusual nature of these innovations, Bede's *Anno Mundi* chronology garners most of the scholarly attention devoted to this work. Bede presented a much-reduced age of the world in his chronicle compared to the mainstream chronicle tradition, as evident by his decision to date the Incarnation to 3,952 years from Creation, compared to 5,199 years 'according to others'.[1] In total his world chronology for the period from Creation to the Incarnation is 1,247 years less than the accepted chronology of his time. The discrepancy is because Bede looked to the Hebrew scriptures, which he knew through Jerome's translation into Latin, rather than the Greek tradition of the Septuagint. The greatest difference in length between the Hebrew and Greek traditions occurs between Adam and Abraham. Under the world age framework this is the first two ages; the fourth world age – the period between King David and the Babylonian Captivity – is also longer by 12 years in the Septuagint tradition.[2]

The chronicle is introduced in *De temporibus* 16 with an outline of the six ages of the world, and the length of each age is presented in generations and years – according to the Vulgate – though Bede does not identify his source. Each subsequent chapter opens with the length of that age in years, except for *DT* 22, which notes that the sixth age has run for 703 years to date.[3] For the world ages that differ in length due to differences in scriptural traditions – that is, the first, second and fourth ages (*DT* 17, 18 and 20) – Bede noted his year count is from the Hebrews and presented the alternative number of years according to the 70 translators, *iuxta LXX interpretes*. He does not comment further. AM years are not one of the key structuring principles of the chronicle, as argued in Chapter Two, and only one AM date is provided in this text; that date is for the Nativity, which Bede dated according to both the Hebrew and Greek traditions.

Bede's lack of explanation for his AM years has raised questions and concerns since *De temporibus* was first published in AD 703, which even led to Bede being called a heretic in the presence of his diocesan bishop, Wilfrid of York (d. 709) in 708. Bede vigorously refuted this charge in his letter to Plegwin by rounding

on his critics and attacking all forms of apocalyptic speculation.[4] Consequently, Bede's Vulgate chronology in *De temporibus* has been treated as explicitly opposed to apocalypticism, even though the evidence post-dates the text. This has led to a further consensus that Bede drastically diverged from the mainstream chronological tradition when he used Vulgate rather than Septuagint chronology, which is based on an unchallenged assumption that *Anno Mundi* years were the standard chronological system in world chronicles during this period. The reality, as we shall see, is that the chronicle tradition is defined by variation and experimentation. A wide range of chronological systems were used and the first western chronicler to employ AM years was Isidore of Seville in the seventh century. The first section of this chapter surveys the development of chronography in the West from Jerome's translation of Eusebius's chronicle in the late fourth century to the 'Fredegar compilation' from early eighth-century Francia to demonstrate the breadth and variety in this genre of writing. This is followed by an analysis of the range of chronologies in use in the Insular World, before returning to Bede and assessing his decision to use Vulgate chronology in relation to theological concerns set against a backdrop of the lively and dynamic nature of chronicle writing in this period.

Chronography in Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages

The wide range of surviving chronological material from the fourth through seventh centuries indicates the dynamic nature of chronography in Late Antiquity and the early medieval world.[5] The best known examples are the representatives of the world chronicle tradition, the most influential of which was the chronicle of Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 263–339), which was disseminated in the Latin West by Jerome (c. 347–420), who translated and updated it to his own day. This chronicle soon acquired many followers and continuators, notable examples of which include: Sulpicius Severus (c. 363–425), Prosper of Aquitaine (c. 390 – c. 455), Cassiodorus (c. 485–585) and Isidore of Seville (c. AD 560–636).[6] In addition to chronicles, a wide array of other calendrical material survives, such as consular lists,[7] and the fascinating repository of Late Roman chronological data in the *Chronograph of 354.*[8] This illustrated codex was prepared for a Christian aristocrat called Valentinus in 354 and contained a diverse collection of calendrical and chronographical material, including the *Liber Generationis*, a version of the third-century world chronicle of Hippolytus translated from Greek to Latin and extended to 334.[9] This source alone reveals the range and breadth of chronological information available to chroniclers in this period.

The chronicles produced from the fourth-century onwards vary in type and form, as we shall see, despite the fact that the world chronicle genre is frequently dismissed for being derivative, unoriginal and unworthy of attention.[10] In opposition to such views, R.W. Burgess and Michael Kulikowski recently argued that chronicles reveal much about contemporary attitudes and the fact that they remained the primary historical records in Western Europe for over a millennium reveals their validity and ongoing relevance.[11] The dynamic nature of the genre is

evident in the many choices made by chroniclers, not least in relation to the chronological systems they adopted. A wide array of options were available, including years from Creation, *Anno mundi* (AM); years from Abraham; regnal years, including, amongst others, those of Old Testament kings, Roman Emperors and later barbarian rulers; consular years; years from the foundation of Rome, *anno ab Urbe condita* (beginning in c. 753 BC); Olympiads (beginning in 776 BC); Roman Indictions (a 15-year taxation cycle introduced in the early fourth century); years from the Passion, *Anno Passionis* (AP); and *Anno Domini* (AD), to name but some. The utility of AD was revealed most dramatically by Bede in his *Historia ecclesiastica*, completed in AD 731 and will be discussed in Chapter Six.

Most works concerned with the past used a combination of chronologies, though it is safe to assert that no writer used all in any one work, primarily because there are too many and there are inconsistencies between them: for example, AP and AD years are incompatible (see further in this chapter), and it is generally agreed that Eusebius used years from Abraham in his chronicle to avoid contemporary debates about the age of the world.[12] The dynamic nature of chronological discussions is apparent in the variety of chronologies that were used in chronicles produced between the fourth and seventh centuries, which places Bede's later experimentation into context.

The chronicle of Eusebius and Jerome

Eusebius wrote his *Chronici canones* in Greek in two books in the early fourth century – the first discussed his sources and the second was a chronological table covering world history from the birth of Abraham during the reign of the Assyrian king, Ninus, to AD 325.[13] Eusebius's chronological table innovatively presented different kingdoms of the world in parallel columns, demonstrating the rise and fall of various empires in world history, which enabled Christians to contextualise the biblical past. Jerome translated the second book, the chronicle of events, into Latin and updated this to 378.[14] Jerome's version circulated widely in the Latin West and became the model for Western chronicles.[15]

The chronicle contained a range of chronological systems, the most important of which was years from Abraham, supplemented by regnal years, consular years, and Olympiads. Eusebius also recorded the foundation of various cities, such as Rome and Carthage, but avoided using what were essentially local chronologies. He occasionally counted time from significant events such as the birth of Moses, or the fall of Troy, and frequently paused to synchronise various chronologies when marking events of major significance. The most important of these for Eusebius was the beginning of Christ's public ministry, which he dated to the 201st Olympiad and correlated with a range of secular and scriptural chronologies, including the fifteenth year of Tiberius's reign;[16] the restoration of the temple in the second year of the Persian king, Darius; Solomon building the first temple; Moses and the Exodus from Egypt; Abraham and the reign of Ninus and Semiramis; and the number of years from the Flood to Abraham, and Adam to the Flood.[17] These markers indicate a division of time into six eras or ages pre-Christ, and Christ's

public ministry inaugurated a seventh age indicating this event's singular importance for Eusebius.[18] Indeed this is the only event that Eusebius linked chronologically with Creation in the chronicle: though he eschewed providing the age of the world, the beginning of Christ's public ministry can be dated to 5,228 years from Adam. In comparison to the chronological fanfare surrounding the beginning of his ministry, the birth of Christ is simply dated to 2,015 years from Abraham, while the Passion occurred in XVIII Tiberius and the 202nd Olympiad.[19]

Jerome continued Eusebius's practises in his translation and continuation of the chronicle: years from Abraham and the Olympiads provided the chronological framework, and he recorded regnal years. One of the few changes Jerome reputedly made to Eusebius's original work was highlighting the Olympiads in red, in recognition of their chronological value.[20] Jerome's chronicle terminated during the sixth consulate of Valens and the second of Valentinian, and he calculated the number of years to his *annus praesens* from various chronological markers, including XV Tiberius and the beginning of Christ's preaching; the restoration of the temple during Darius's reign; the first Olympiad, at which time Isaiah was prophesying amongst the Hebrews; Solomon and the first temple; the fall of Troy and the time of Sampson among the Hebrews; Moses and Cecrops, the first king of Attica; and Abraham and the reign of Ninus and Semiramis. He then, like Eusebius when marking Christ's public ministry, counted time from the Flood to Abraham and Adam to the Flood, and concluded the chronicle by recording that there were 5,579 years from Adam to the fourteenth year of Valens, his sixth consulate and the second of Valentinian.[21] Jerome moved away from Eusebius's seven-era framework and does not appear to have replaced it with any known division of time, although his nine-part presentation is based on significant events in biblical and classical history. Jerome provided the only year count from Creation in the chronicle and may have unintentionally inaugurated what was to become a commonplace practise.

Fifth-century chroniclers and continuators

Jerome's chronicle was 'an immediate and long-term success' and inspired subsequent western chroniclers.[22] However, the flexibility of the tradition remained apparent. Sulpicius Severus compiled his world chronicle in the early fifth century and, though influenced by Eusebius-Jerome, presented a radically different structure and view of time.[23] His chronicle began with the story of Creation in Genesis and continued to his own day: rather than follow the chronicle format with a tabular presentation of dates and events in sequence, he instead offered a narrative account of world history. In this, Sulpicius did not distinguish between sacred and secular history, nor did he introduce clear delineations between biblical and post-biblical history. His chronicle is divided into two books, the first of which ends with the Babylonian Captivity, and the second continues with the Old Testament book of Daniel. There is little focus on the life of Christ, which is presented in one chapter (book 2.27) and the reader is referred to the New Testament for further information.[24] No event in the life of Christ, nor indeed his life

as a whole, is presented as a chronological hinge point, and more surprisingly Sulpicius dated the Incarnation to 5,500 years from Creation.[25] In doing so he appears to be following the traditions of earlier Eastern chronography, such as chroniclers like Julius Africanus.[26] Sulpicius's chronicle, then, is very different to the mainstream chronicle tradition, and in some respects is regarded as a new hybrid form combining chronicle features with elements from classical *historia*.[27] However, Sulpicius's innovative approach to the problem of combining secular and sacred histories found few imitators.

Prosper of Aquitaine more closely followed the example of Eusebius-Jerome, essentially presenting an abbreviated version of Jerome's translated and updated chronicle. Like most chroniclers, he also updated his chronicle to his own time and, like Sulpicius, extended backwards to begin with Adam.[28] These developments proved very influential and most of Prosper's successors also began with Creation. However, although Prosper began his chronicle with Adam, he did not count time from Creation, maintaining Eusebius-Jerome's years from Abraham and rejecting an *Anno Mundi* chronology. He counted time using generations for the period from Adam to the Flood, which is unusual in western chronicles.[29] Prosper also introduced an important chronological innovation as he began a new year count from the Passion, which he dated to the fifteenth year of Tiberius, instituting AP chronology: this was adopted soon afterwards by his compatriot, Victorius of Aquitaine, and widely popularised in his Easter table.[30] From the Passion onwards, Prosper used a dual chronology, counting time in years from Abraham and AP, and his consular list began at this point.

Prosper also followed Eusebius-Jerome in synchronising various chronological markers with XV Tiberius to orientate this event in world chronology. In doing so he used the same chronological markers and year numbers as Eusebius: Darius and the restoration of the temple; Solomon and the first temple; Moses and the Exodus from Egypt; Abraham and the reign of Ninus and Semiramis; from the Flood to Abraham; and Adam to the Flood.[31] However, unlike Eusebius, Prosper provided the total number of years from Adam to XV Tiberius amounting to 5,228.[32] And, more significantly, Prosper diverged from Eusebius-Jerome in dating the Passion to XV, not XVIII, Tiberius. Eusebius-Jerome's Passion date came from John's gospel, which implies that Christ celebrated Passover three times with his disciples following his Baptism aged about 30. This was the practise of the Eastern church. However, in the western church, the traditional date for the Passion was XV Tiberius, following the synoptic gospels, which suggest Christ's public ministry was much shorter, seemingly a matter of months.[33] Prosper briefly explained his decision in the chronicle before resuming his recording of events with his consular list and placing the Passion in the consulship of the two Gemini: Fufius and Rubellius.[34]

Hydatius, in the late fifth century, took a different approach to chronicle writing, as he began where Jerome had finished. His work contained a brief preface, followed by Jerome's concluding chronological summary, the age of the world and then a further introduction to his continuation.[35] Hydatius noted that the writing of chronicles had declined by his own time to the extent that an amateur, such

as he, could follow in the footsteps of his predecessors.[36] His continuation began with the Emperor Theodosius and concluded in 469, and his chronological systems were imperial years and Olympiads. He dropped Eusebius-Jerome's years from Abraham and, apart from the preface, avoided years from Creation.[37]

Despite Hydatius's criticisms the production of chronographical material was clearly very popular in this period. Along with Christian world chronicles, Eutropius compiled a classical chronicle, the *Breviarium ab urbe condita*, and consular lists like the so-called *Consularia Constantinopolitana* continued to be created.[38] The Christian identity of the *Consularia* is indicated by its inclusion of the Passion, dated here – as in Prosper – to the consulship of the two Gemini.[39] The utility of consular years for measuring time is also apparent in Victorius of Aquitaine's fifth-century Easter table, the *Cyclus Paschali*, where they were recorded alongside the *Annus Passionis*.

Although they did not write chronicles, Augustine of Hippo (354–430) and Orosius (c. 385–c. 420) are the final fifth-century figures who influenced subsequent chroniclers that I will consider. Augustine paid much attention to the meaning of time and matters of chronology in his works. It is a running theme in *De Civitate Dei*, and he devoted much of books 11 and 12 of the *Confessions* to a discussion of time and eternity.[40] As we have seen, Augustine's six world age scheme was extremely influential for understanding time, and after Isidore of Seville fused it to world chronology this became the dominant division of universal history.[41] However, Augustine's works indicate he was not as certain about when the sixth age began as many of his followers were, as he varied between the beginning of Christ's ministry in XV Tiberius and the Nativity.[42]

Orosius's *Historiarum adversum paganos*, produced at the request of Augustine, was another influential work and important resource for later chroniclers.[43] Orosius supplemented Eusebius-Jerome with pagan sources and his intention was to reveal divine providence at work in the history of the Roman Empire, a view which is apparent in his chronological choices, as he avoided years from Abraham in favour of the foundation of Rome (*ab Urbe condita*) from Roman historiography.[44] He also used AUC to date pre-Roman events; for example, the reign of the Assyrian king, Ninus, who ruled when Abraham was born, and begins the work, was dated to 1,300 years before the foundation of the city.[45] Orosius also introduced two new four-fold divisions of time both focussed on Rome. The first was based on Nebuchadnezzar's dream in the book of Daniel (c. 2:31–45), which was interpreted as four successive kingdoms successively dominating the world and culminating in Rome. The other divided human history into four distinct epochs: Adam to Ninus; Ninus to the foundation of Rome; the foundation of Rome to the accession of Augustus; and Augustus, whose reign witnessed the Incarnation of Christ, to Orosius's own day.[46] Orosius's emphasis on Augustus is probably a relic of Roman tradition, which regarded the rise of Augustus as the beginning of a new age.[47] Although neither of Orosius's frameworks of time were adopted in full by subsequent chroniclers, the *Histories* was a popular work,[48] and many Christian authors acknowledged the importance of Augustus's reign for providential history. Luke's account of the Nativity referred to the census of Augustus, an event

that could only occur at a time of universal peace – a peace which subsequently aided the spread of Christianity – and was consequently interpreted as divinely ordained.[49]

Sixth-century chroniclers: Cassiodorus, Marcellinus Comes and Victor of Tonenna

Cassiodorus (c. 485–585) created his chronicle in 519 to mark the consulship of Theodoric's son-in-law, Eutharic and Emperor Justin I.[50] The chronicle is essentially a consular list, as described by Cassiodorus in the preface, but with additions to cover world history. The work starts with Adam, followed by the Flood, and then Ninus – the first Assyrian king – who ruled when Abraham was born. The association between Abraham and Ninus was a popular way to link sacred and secular histories for chroniclers, as we have seen in the opening of Eusebius-Jerome and in Ninus's importance for Orosius. Cassiodorus then ran through the kings of the Assyrians, Latins and Romans before beginning his list of consuls with Brutus and Tarquinius. For the most part, the chronicle is a list of names with occasional extra information from the chronicles of Eusebius-Jerome and Prosper, and Roman sources such as Livy.[51] When the Roman emperors are introduced the consuls are presented as those in office during each emperor's reign, and the quantity of additional information increases. However, consular years remain the primary method of dating: the birth of Christ is dated to a consular year and the 41st year of Augustus, while the death of Christ is solely dated by consuls.[52] Cassiodorus concluded the chronicle with year calculations similar to Jerome, though his chronological markers are the beginning of his regnal and consular lists, along with Adam and the Flood, providing a variant six-fold division of time. He noted that from Adam to the Flood, there are 2,242 years; the Flood to Ninus, there are 899 years;[53] Ninus to the first king of the Latins, 852 years; first king of the Latins to Romulus, 457 years; Romulus to the first consuls, 240 years; and from the first consuls to the consulship of Eutharic and Justin I, 1,031 years. In total, Cassiodorus noted there were 5,721 years from Adam to his *annus praesens*.[54]

Cassiodorus's chronology placed the Incarnation in c. AM 5200, which was the generally accepted date in his time, and allows a date of c. AM 5231 for the Passion.[55] Although Cassiodorus does not explicitly say so, his chronology indicates he followed the long view of Christ's public ministry from John's Gospel and advocated by Eusebius-Jerome, rather than the shorter version from the synoptic gospels and standard in the western church. Cassiodorus did not provide Tiberius's regnal date for the death of Christ, perhaps to avoid the contentious debate over whether this occurred in his fifteenth or eighteenth year. However, his consular list diverges from that in Prosper's *Chronicle* at this point with the addition of two consulships – that of Vinicius and Cassius and the fifth consulship of Tiberius, which were inserted after the consulship of Fufius and Rubellius (or the two Gemini) and before the consulship of Vinicius and Longinus.[56] Cassiodorus dated the Passion to the fifth consulship of Tiberius while it is dated to the consulship of the two Gemini in almost all western sources. Interestingly, the fifth consulship

of Tiberius is included in the *Chronograph of 354*'s consular list and in the *Consulari Constantinopolitana*, though both date the Passion to the consulship of the two Gemini two years earlier.[57] Cassiodorus appears to have consulted a range of sources for his consular list and departed from the western church's tradition that Christ died when he was 30 in the same year as his Baptism. This can be confirmed in his *Institutiones*, written decades later at the monastery of Vivarium, where he observed that the first book appropriately has 33 chapters corresponding to the age of Christ at his death.[58] Cassiodorus recommended the work of several Christian historians, including Eusebius-Jerome, Marcellinus Comes and Prosper of Aquitaine, in the first book of the *Institutiones* but neglected his own chronicle, merely noting that many later chroniclers have recorded their own epochs.[59]

Marcellinus Comes (d. c. 534) wrote a chronicle in Constantinople that covered the period from 378 to 534, with a further anonymous continuation to 548.[60] Like Hydatius, Marcellinus elected to compile a continuation to Jerome's chronicle and, also like Hydatius, he adopted a different chronological framework to the work he was succeeding. In his preface, Marcellinus noted that the world was 5,579 years old at the end of Eusebius and Jerome's chronicle, and he was continuing their work using simple calculations based on the indiction cycle and consular years: his continuation opens in the seventh indiction and the consulship of Ausonius and Olybrius.[61] Observing these chronological systems, Marcellinus presented a year-by-year account, which contains substantial information for a western chronicle and is primarily concerned with the Eastern Empire, the city of Constantinople and the Church. Apart from repeating Jerome's age of the world in his preface, Marcellinus pays no further attention to such matters.

Victor of Tonenna, in North Africa, wrote a continuation of Prosper's *Chronicle* which ran from 444 to 566 and used consular years as the main chronological apparatus.[62] His work ends with a year count from Adam to the Nativity, which he dated to 5,199 years, and a year count from the Nativity to his *annus praesens* – he placed the Nativity in the 43rd year of Augustus, and from there to the first year of the emperor Justin was an interval of 567 years. Victor also noted that the total years from Creation to the *annus praesens* were 5,766.[63] As Victor followed Prosper, the inventor of *Annus Passionis*, it is curious that he focussed on the Nativity rather than the Passion. This may reflect other influences, such as the importance of Augustus in Roman tradition and the Easter table of Dionysius Exiguus. His date for the Nativity concurs with Eusebius-Jerome's, though Alden Mosshammer has argued that his interval of 576 years came from calibrating the indictional year with an AD year from Dionysius's Easter table.[64]

Seventh-century chroniclers: Isidore of Seville and the 'Fredegar compilation'

The chronicles of Isidore of Seville were probably the most influential on developments in western chronography after the chronicle of Eusebius-Jerome. Isidore produced two world chronicles: the *Chronica Maiora*, of which there are two redactions (AD 615–16 and 626), as has been demonstrated by José Carlos Martín

in his edition of the text;[65] and the *Chronica Minora*, or *Chronicon* B, contained within the *Etymologiae*, book 5.38–9.[66] The shorter chronicle is clearly an epitome of the *Chronica Maiora*, and, according to Sam Koon and Jamie Wood, it is more closely related to the second redaction of the *Chronica Maiora*.[67]

Isidore began his chronicles with a brief summary of the Creation account in Genesis – the hexameron – and then moved from the sixth day and the creation of Adam to the birth of Seth in AM 230 firmly grounding his chronicles in scripture. From then on, he counted time from Creation in both redactions of the *Chronica Maiora* and the *Chronica Minora*. In doing so Isidore entirely dispensed with years from Abraham and instigated an *Anno Mundi* chronology based on the Septuagint as his primary chronological system; this appears to be the first time such a chronology was used in a western chronicle. In addition, Isidore incorporated Augustine's six ages of the world in the second redaction of his *Chronica Maiora* and repeated it in the *Chronica Minora*.[68] This further underlined the link between the hexameron and his view of world history, as the six days of Creation are reflected in the six ages of the world framework. These chronographical developments were important and influential, and they further underscore the vibrant nature of chronicle writing in this period.

Isidore's *Chronica Maiora* presented a somewhat novel response to debates surrounding the date of the Passion. As we have seen, Eusebius-Jerome dated the beginning of Christ's public ministry to XV Tiberius and placed his death in XVIII Tiberius, while the western church observed the short view of Christ's public ministry and dated his Baptism and death to XV Tiberius. From Eusebius-Jerome onwards most chroniclers equated XV Tiberius with 5,228 years from Creation, and for those advocating the short ministry hypothesis, this became the accepted date for the Passion.[69] Isidore's chronicle, uniquely as far as I can tell, conflated both traditions as he dated the Passion to XVIII Tiberius and 5,228 years from Creation in both recensions of the *Chronica Maiora*.[70] The implications of this shift for the birth of Christ may not have been considered. The Nativity is placed during the reign of Augustus but not given a precise date indicating the greater emphasis placed on the Passion for Christian chronology. Isidore's *Anno Mundi* chronology and his AM Passion date were widely disseminated and became somewhat ubiquitous, as we shall see.

The final chronicle to consider in this overview of chronographical works prior to Bede is the seventh-century so-called 'Chronicle of Fredegar'. The complex transmission history of this work and its possible authorship need not detain us here; my interest is in the first section of the work, the earliest version of which is preserved in a manuscript dated to 715 (Paris BN lat. 10910, ff. 1–170) and designated the 'Fredegar compilation'.[71] This chronicle terminates in 642, though the author revealed knowledge of the reign of Emperor Constans (642–68), which indicates they were working around 660.[72] In modern editions, beginning with Bruno Krusch, the work is presented in four books.[73] The first three books are compilations and epitomes of earlier material, specifically: the *Liber Generationis* (which circulated in one form in the *Chronograph of 354*), Jerome's version of Eusebius, Hydatius, and the first six books of Gregory of Tours' *Libri*

Historiarum. The evidence indicates that the *Liber Generationis* and a composite Eusebius-Jerome-Hydatius chronicle were being transmitted together from the late fifth century onwards, which may explain how the compiler had a copy of the *Liber Generationis*.[74] The fourth book concerns the period from 584–642 and is the work of 'Fredegar'.

Due to the nature of this compilation there is no clear overarching chronology running through the work. Book One presents Old Testament and ancient history along with lists of prophets, kings and others from the *Liber Generationis*;[75] this is followed by year counts from Eusebius-Jerome's major chronological markers and updated to the reign of the Frankish king, Sigibert from Adam, entitled *Supputatio Eusebii Hieronimi*,[76] a list of popes,[77] an account of the six days of Creation[78] and further lists of names from Adam to Moses, followed by Judges and kings of Israel, Persian and Ptolemaic monarchs and Roman emperors.[79] Book one contains several year totals counting time from Creation and other chronological markers, including intervals of time counted using years and generations from the *Liber Generationis*.[80] The overarching chronology of book two, which is taken from Eusebius-Jerome-Hydatius with interpolations by 'Fredegar', appears to be regnal years, especially Roman imperial years.[81] This was the practise of Hydatius, but not Eusebius-Jerome suggesting this was the structure of the chronicle as 'Fredegar' received it; the regnal years, for the most part, are those of Eusebius-Jerome, and the few discrepancies are minor, usually a year longer or shorter, and may reflect scribal error. That this text appears to have been received as one source is also indicated by the way 'Fredegar' moves from Eusebius-Jerome to Hydatius without comment or acknowledgement of a new source.[82] Book three is excerpts from Gregory of Tours, and the chronology is Frankish regnal years, which were used by Gregory.[83] Book four, which is the work of the compiler, is structured on the regnal years of Merovingian kings.[84] I have not identified any year counts from Creation in books three and four.

A final point on chronology in 'Fredegar' is to note that the chronicle consistently dated the Passion to XV Tiberius, or when Christ was 30 years old, thereby advocating the short ministry of the Synoptic gospels.[85] This, as we have seen, was the traditional date in the West.[86] Although Eusebius-Jerome dated the Passion to XVIII Tiberius, it seems likely that this was 'corrected' in 'Fredegar's version of their chronicle as the Passion was explicitly dated to when Christ was 30, or XV Tiberius, in the *Supputatio Eusebii Hieronimi* of book one and the abridgement of Eusebius-Jerome in book two.[87] On the second occasion, the author acknowledged that the Passion occurred later in John's Gospel because it presented Christ's mission as lasting for three years, indicating they were aware of the contentious nature of this debate.[88]

Summary

We have seen in this survey of western chronography prior to Bede that there was no single form for chronicle writing, rather the genre expanded and developed throughout the period. This can be seen in the variation in structure, presentation,

chronological systems and dating of major events in our sources. It is especially notable that Isidore of Seville was the only chronicler to explicitly use *Anno Mundi* years as the overarching chronological system in his work, despite the somewhat common misapprehension that this was standard in world chronicles from this period. In contrast, we have seen that our chroniclers used years from Abraham, Olympiads, *ab urbe condita*, a broad range of regnal years (with Roman emperors often achieving positions of prominence), consular years, indictions and *Annus Passionis*. Despite this variety, these chronicles tend to agree on the age of the world as presented in Eusebius-Jerome, with the exception of Sulpicius Severus.[89] The major point of difference in matters of chronology concerns the date of the Passion, which was variously placed in XV Tiberius when Christ was 30 following the synoptic gospels, or in XVIII Tiberius after Christ's three year public ministry following John's gospel. That several chronicles allude to such debates indicates the vibrancy and engagement of the genre and confirms that chroniclers, like all writers, respond to the needs and interests of their time. The next section will assess chronological practises in the Insular World up to and including the time of Bede, and section three will examine Bede's choice of Vulgate chronology.

Chronology in the Insular World

The Insular World inherited much from the Mediterranean world of Late Antiquity through a complex process of transmission and transformation over several centuries. The sophisticated nature of Insular intellectual culture has been the subject of many studies which demonstrate that the reception of Late Antiquity was an active rather than passive act on the islands of Britain and Ireland.[90] The seventh-century Irish achievements in computus demonstrate this lively engagement with a complex and advanced field of knowledge;[91] the same is true for chronology, which is often directly connected to computus, as we shall see.

The influence of Victorius of Aquitaine

Computistical texts preserve a range of chronological details, which frequently enable us to accurately date when they were written: as much Irish computistical material is anonymous, this is invaluable and has enabled many unknown texts to be dated to the seventh and eighth centuries. The influence of the Victorian Easter in Ireland is apparent in that the dating practises from that table, such as consular years and the *Annus Passionis*, were frequently used, even by those who advocated the Dionysian reckoning, confirming Victorius of Aquitaine's status as an authority in Ireland.[92] As the Victorian table was in its second 532-year cycle by the seventh century, when the Irish used it, the names of consuls from the first running were reproduced. To get the correct date the consuls have to be compared to the correct AP year in the table and 532 years added to this figure: to correlate with AD years we must add 27. This can be seen in the *Munich Computus*, which incorporates an *annus praesens* of the year of Berus and Bardoa. They are equated with Vero and Bradua in the Victorian cycle, who were consuls in Year 130 of its

first running, and AP 662 in the second running, which becomes AD 689 [130 + 532 + 27 = 689].[93]

An example of dating using *Annus Passionis* is preserved in the famous dating clause from the *Sirmond Computus*: 'In truth, there are 631 years from the Passion of the Lord until the Easter of Suibine mac Commáin, which has [just] transpired' (*Ex domini uero passione usque in pascha quod secutum est Suibini filii Commanni anni sunt DCXXXI*).[94] This is 658 [= 631 + 27] in our chronology and confirms that a wealth of computistical material had been gathered in Ireland by the mid-seventh century, which was subsequently transmitted to Northumbria, where it greatly influenced Bede.[95] This collection contained much of Bede's information about the Dionysian Easter reckoning, but the manuscript also clearly preserved Victorian data, including a 532-year Victorian Easter table, which further illustrates that many Irish proponents of the Dionysian Easter continued to regard Victorius as an authority.

The Victorian Easter also appears to have played a role in popularising *Anno Mundi* chronology in Ireland. As we have seen, Victorius was influenced by Prosper of Aquitaine in his choice of chronology, and noted in the prologue to his Easter table that the chronicles have shown that Christ suffered after 5,228 years had elapsed from the beginning of the world.[96] This chronology can be found in computistical sources, such as *De ratione conputandi*, the *Munich Computus* and the 'Victorian Prologue of AD 699', all of which were influenced by Victorius;[97] and in other contexts, such as ps-Augustine, *De mirabilibus sacrae scripturae* and the prologue of an Irish grammatical text, *Anonymus ad Cuimnanum*.[98] Ps-Augustine took the Victorian computus further, as he used the 532-year cycle to record time from Creation to his own day in AD 654.[99] Ps-Augustine equated AM 1 with the first year of a 532-year cycle and calculated time forwards culminating in a 12-cycle view of world history. His *annus praesens* is the third year of the twelfth cycle and AM 5855.[100]

Victorius had originally connected his computus to universal chronology using AM years. He dated the first day of Creation to Sunday, 25 March, which is compatible with his Easter cycle only if Year 1 (AP 1) equals AM 5229.[101] If this were accurate then AM 1 equals Year 93 of a Victorian 532-year cycle.[102] Ps-Augustine seems to have misconstrued this somewhat, as, for him, AM 1 is Year 1 of a 532-year cycle, which means his Passion date falls in AM 5228 and Year 440 of a 532-year cycle (the tenth 532-year cycle), but the Passion year is not Year 1 of the cycle. There was a longstanding tradition of synchronising Year 1 of a great Easter cycle with AM 1 in the Eastern Church. Philipp Nothaft has observed that the Alexandrian monk, Annianus (fl. 400) built his entire chronology around the 19-year luni-solar cycle, with AM 1 as the first year of a 19-year cycle and a 532-year cycle.[103] This practise had not been introduced in the West, probably due to the less developed mathematical skills of western churchmen and thinkers, and the subtlety appears to have been lost on ps-Augustine. While Victorius linked his computus to chronology, AM years were of secondary importance as his cycle began with the year of the Passion. In attempting to develop the connection between universal chronology and the 532-year cycle, ps-Augustine

inadvertently broke the link between Victorius's AP 1 and the calendrical data for the year of the Passion.

Despite these concerns, ps-Augustine's 'twelve cycles' were somewhat influential amongst Irish computists, as they were incorporated into the *Munich Computus*, most probably from the 'Victorian Computus of AD 689'.[104] This work also shows similar difficulties in synchronising computistical years with AM chronology. The compiler of *Munich* dated Creation to Sunday, 21 March, and the fourth day of Creation was *luna* xiv.[105] He then argued that the same calendrical data applied in the years of the Exodus (AM 3688) and Passion (AM 5228).[106] While the symbolism of such numerical symmetry is apparent, the calendar is less obliging. The computus rules are very clear in that the same calendrical and lunar data repeat exactly only after 532 years in the Julian calendar. On that basis AM 1, 3688 and 5228 cannot have the same solar and lunar chronology, and cannot provide the days, dates and lunar age that the *Munich* computist (or his source) ascribed to these years: if AM 1 equals Year 1 of a 532-year cycle, then AM 3688 equals Year 496 and AM 5228 equals Year 440. Immo Warntjes notes that the compiler of *Munich* should have known that his AM years for the Creation, Exodus and Passion could not return the same solar and lunar data.[107] He, or his source, was possibly influenced by Victorius, who compared the chronology of these three years in his prologue,[108] but the disparity between computus and chronology was introduced after Victorius, who did not make such errors.

The final way in which this *Anno Mundi* chronology appears to have been used was in apocalyptic countdowns. The most famous of these occurs in the dating clause preserved in the *Sirmond computus*. Along with the AP date we have looked at, the clause includes:

> *A pascha autem supradicto usque ad tempus praefinitum consummationis mundi, id est sex milibus consummatis, anni sunt CXLI.*
> Furthermore, there are 141 years from the above-mentioned Pasch [i.e. the Easter of Suibine mac Commáin] until the precise time when the world ends, that is once 6,000 years elapses.[109]

The belief that the world would end after 6,000 years was an old idea in Christian circles by the seventh century but it nevertheless appears to have been widespread in the Insular World during our period.[110] If we follow the mainstream chronological tradition that Christ's Baptism took place 5,228 years after Creation, AD 700 corresponds to AM 5901, indicating that AM 6000 was imminent. This view appears to come, at least in part, from a literal reading of scriptural verses such as Psalm 89:4 (Vulgate) and 2 Peter 3:8, both of which imply that for God a day equals 1,000 years and became associated with the idea that each age of the world should last for 1,000 years.[111] As we have seen, the six days of Creation were connected to the six ages of the world framework, and this link was cemented in chronicle-writing by Isidore of Seville, who opened his chronicles with the hexameron and structured time on Augustine's six world ages.

These beliefs also appear to have been prevalent in early eighth-century Northumbria. As noted at the outset of this chapter, Bede's world chronology in *De temporibus* saw him accused of heresy because he dated the Incarnation to the fourth millennium of historical time (AM 3952): his detractors argued that he denied the Incarnation occurred in the sixth world age.[112] It is clear, of course, that the Incarnation inaugurated the sixth world age for Bede but this controversy, which arose from events at the court of Bishop Wilfrid in 708, reveals how pervasive such views about the age of the world had become – at least, in ecclesiastical circles – by Bede's time. Our sole evidence for these events is Bede's 'Letter to Plegwin', which he wrote in response to the charge of heresy. Plegwin's identity is unknown and his role in clearing Bede's name appears to have been limited to presenting the letter to 'our religious and very learned brother David', who Bede hoped would read the letter before Wilfrid to exonerate him. David's identity is also a mystery, but we can assume Bede was confident Wilfrid would listen to him, though why Bede wrote to Plegwin as intermediary rather than directly to David, or indeed Wilfrid, is also unclear.[113]

As well as defending his orthodoxy in this letter, Bede attacked apocalyptic speculation, which he suggests was all-pervasive in Northumbria at the time. He wrote:

> *Unde et ipse satis doleo, fateor, et quantum licet uel amplius irasci soleo quoties a rusticis interrogor quot de ultimo milliario saeculi restent anni. Atque contra ipsi ab illis sciscitari unde nouerunt quod nunc ultimum agatur milliarium, cum Dominus in Euangelio non tempus Aduentus sui prope uel procul esse testetur.*
>
>   On this matter I confess I am quite grieved, and often irritated to the limit of what is permissible, or even beyond, when every day I am asked by rustics how many years are left in the final millennium of the world, or learn from them that they know that the final millennium is in progress, when our Lord in the Gospel did not testify that the time of His advent was near at hand or far off.[114]

Bede continued to outline various apocalyptic beliefs and dismissed them all by referring to the authority of Augustine and scripture.[115] He continued this theme almost 20 years later in *De temporum ratione* and defended his chronological choice in that work's preface, even though the chronicle with Vulgate chronology does not feature until Chapter 66. He also concluded *De temporum ratione* with five chapters on eschatology (cc. 67–71), further underscoring the futility of apocalyptic speculation. Apocalypticism was a serious consideration for Bede from 708 onwards, but the evidence suggests it was of less significance earlier, which raises the question of why did Bede adopt a shorter span of time in the *De temporibus* world chronicle? Prior to addressing this we shall briefly consider other chronological systems that were in use in the Insular World at the time.

Alternative chronologies

The Irish 84-year Easter cycle, known as the *latercus*, was discovered by Dáibhí Ó Cróinín in Padua (Bibl. Antoniana MS I 27, fol. 76r-77v) after an absence of over

a millennium from the historical record, and he and Daniel Mc Carthy succeeded in interpreting and reconstructing this cycle.[116] The 84-year table was unlike the other Easter reckonings we have discussed in that it did not anchor its calculations by any era and instead marked each year with the kalends and ferial apparatus. The first column in the table presents *K* or *Kl* and the ferial for the 1 January, that is, the day of the week of 1 January in that year; for example, if 1 January were a Friday, as the week began on Sunday, the column would read *kl.* vif (kalends 6 *feria*).[117] As an ordinary year has 365 days, which when divided by 7 leaves a remainder of 1, the ferial should increase by 1 each year; except following a leap-year, when the ferial should increase by 2. Mc Carthy and Ó Cróinín explain:

> Thus we expect a pattern of three single increments of one followed by an increment of two, and examination of the eighty-four entries shows this to be so in all but two cases (cyclic numbers 6 and 23), where in both cases the ferial of the preceding year has been accidentally repeated. When the necessary correction is made, a regular pattern of three single increments followed by a double increment is obtained for the entire table.[118]

This 28-year cycle, which underpinned the 84-year Easter, allows a check on the table's year-by-year accuracy.

This kalends and ferial annual chronological apparatus is most unusual; it has been identified as 'peculiarly Irish',[119] and, fascinatingly, a version is replicated in the Irish annals.[120] In many of the surviving annals, the boundary between year entries is frequently marked by a *K* or *Kl* for the kalends of January, and in the *Annals of Tigernach* and *Chronicum Scottorum* the kalends and ferial apparatus is used.[121] Although transcription errors had led many to believe this chronology was corrupted beyond measure, Mc Carthy has succeeded in restoring the annals' chronological apparatus.[122] It seems most likely that the annalists received their chronological system from the 84-year Easter table used throughout the Irish Church until the early seventh century and persisted with in the northern regions until 716.[123] Immo Warntjes has suggested that defining the year in such fashion was an Irish characteristic that was still employed after the 84-year Easter reckoning was rejected.[124]

The link between the chronological apparatus of the Irish annals and the 84-year Easter table raises old and longstanding questions about the relationship between these two forms. The earliest European annals have been regarded as the most 'primitive' form of historical record and, as there are examples of such annals in the margins of Easter tables, the traditional view is that the keeping of annals were inspired by such tables.[125] This view has been challenged in recent years for several reasons. First, the surviving manuscripts of Easter tables with marginal annals are later than manuscripts of annals themselves, and as the events recorded were often much earlier it proves that notices were transcribed from other sources rather than always recorded contemporaneously. In her comprehensive assessment of the so-called Frankish annals from Lindisfarne and Kent preserved in manuscripts of Dionysius's *Cyclus paschali*, Jo Story has suggested

that entries like *obits* may have come from liturgical calendars which were later added to Easter tables.[126] This relationship is eminently plausible, as such material often travelled with Easter tables, such as the early eighth-century calendar of Willibrord.[127] In discussing the Frankish annals, which began to be recorded in the eighth century, Rosamond McKitterick has revised her earlier view to argue that the belief that annals came from Easter tables downgrades the annal as a form of historical writing. She suggests that Easter tables with annal entries are an adaptation of annal records, not the other way around.[128] The pendulum has similarly swung on the relationship of the Irish annals to Easter tables.[129] Whatever the actual origin of the annals, it seems most probable that kalends and ferial dating was adopted by the annalists from Easter tables, not the other way around. This unusual chronological apparatus, which appears to be completely independent of the other chronologies we have looked at, is a further example of the range of chronological systems in use during this period. Its accuracy and reliability have been confirmed through examining astronomical data in the annals, such as references to eclipses.[130]

In debates about the origin of the Irish annals, the influence of Late Antique world chronicles has been highlighted by several scholars. Whether the arrival of a major world chronicle – or perhaps a composite world chronicle of the type used by Fredegar – was the spur which led to Irish contemporaneous recording of local events, or an Irish tendency to record local events was later fused with the mainstream world chronicle tradition is unknown. The surviving annals as a collection present a comprehensive record of world events from Creation to late medieval Ireland, and they preserve *Anno Mundi* chronologies using both the Septuagint and the Vulgate. As Bede's *De temporum ratione* is clearly a source for later Irish annalists and was incorporated into the annals sometime before the tenth century, this has usually been identified as the origin of their Vulgate chronology, while it seems likely that they received the Septuagint chronology from a version of Isidore. However, Mc Carthy has argued that the Vulgate borrowing goes in the other direction and Bede received his Vulgate chronology from an unknown source that also underpinned the chronology of the Irish Annals.

This theory was first proposed by John Morris, who suggested that this unknown source may have been a more complete translation of Eusebius's chronicle than Jerome, and updated to AD 607.[131] Mc Carthy has built on Morris's work to argue that the Irish received an otherwise unknown chronicle by Rufinus of Aquileia (c. 340–410), which used Vulgate chronology and was transmitted through Gaul to Ireland. It was then acquired by Columba c. 550, who brought it to his monastery of Iona, where it provided the foundation for an Irish world chronicle that underlies the later annal tradition.[132] These studies have raised intriguing questions about Bede's sources, and it is entirely probable that Bede and the Irish had recourse to sources now lost to us. However, I am unconvinced by their arguments for the origin of Bede's Vulgate chronology. While they have detected interesting shared characteristics between the annals and Bede's second chronicle in *De temporum ratione*, their arguments frequently break down when the evidence from *De temporibus* is considered. Indeed, Morris never mentioned Bede's first

chronicle and appears not to have known it existed. We know that Bede acquired additional chronographical material between 703 and 725, and it is possible that he received an unknown source also known to Irish annalists when compiling his second chronicle, but there is no substantial evidence that he had this when writing *De temporibus*.[133]

As we have seen, there is scant evidence that *Anno Mundi* chronologies were used in chronographical materials produced in the western church between the fourth to seventh centuries prior to Isidore; it therefore seems most unlikely that two different world chronologies were received in Ireland in the seventh century without comment in contemporary sources. It is not improbable that Irish scholars could have independently looked to the Vulgate for chronology. Jerome was highly esteemed amongst Irish exegetes and there is ample evidence that the Vulgate text was known in seventh-century Ireland.[134] However, we have seen that when seventh- and eighth-century Irish sources use *Annus Mundi*, it is consistently that of the Septuagint and specifically the chronology of Prosper-Victorius.[135] Indeed, the influence of Victorius's Easter table on the Irish understanding of world chronology cannot be underestimated in this period. An important witness to chronology in seventh-century Ireland is the 'Victorian Prologue of AD 699'. This text compared the AP, AD and Septuagint AM chronologies then in use to demonstrate the erroneous nature of Dionysius's *Annus Domini*.[136] There is no indication of variant AM chronologies, and had a Vulgate chronology been in Ireland that challenged the world chronology of Victorius, it is not unreasonable to expect that it would have been derided along with AD here.[137]

The final example of variant chronologies in the Insular World to be considered here occurs in the curious text, the *Laterculus Malalianus*, believed to have been written in Canterbury in the late seventh century.[138] The main source for the *Laterculus* was a sixth-century Byzantine world chronicle by John Malalas, which preserved unusual ideas about the age of the world, including that the Passion took place 6,000 years after Creation.[139] According to the *Laterculus*, the Incarnation occurred 5,967 years from Adam, during the 42nd year of Augustus, and Christ lived on earth for 33 years.[140] This is a most unusual reckoning and diverges from the view in older Eastern sources that the Incarnation occurred in AM 5500. In the following chapter, the author claims that the chronology presented here is widely accepted, stating:

> *In sex milia autem annorum concordant omnes apparuisse Dominum; quamuis Scotti concordare nolunt, qui sapientia se existimant habere, et scientiam perdederunt.*
>
> However, all agree that the Lord appeared in 6,000 years – though the Irish do not wish to concur, who judge themselves to have wisdom, and [so] lose knowledge.[141]

This has been presented as independent evidence that the Irish were using a different chronology than the rest of the world in this period, possibly based on the Vulgate. However, as the author is mistaken in claiming that his chronology

is accepted by all, it is at best flimsy evidence.[142] If the text dates to the late seventh century, as seems likely, it was written during the Easter Controversy in the Insular Church and may reflect a general criticism of Irish views on time and chronology, views that were shared by Aldhelm, another product of the Canterbury school.[143] The scale and nature of the difference between the supposed Irish chronology and everyone else's is also unclear here.[144] It is possible the author is referring to Irish *computistica* which dated the Passion to AM 5228 and the end of the world to AM 6000.[145] As the *Laterculus* presented a chronology in which the Passion occurred in AM 6000, it was directly contradicted by these computistical texts. This text also disapproved of attempts to calculate the end of the world in general, putting the author further at odds with Irish computists.[146] And finally, the Irish dated the Passion to AM 5228 and XV Tiberius in opposition to the *Laterculus*, which argued that the Passion took place in XVIII Tiberius and Christ was 33 when he died.[147] In short, the evidence from the *Laterculus* does not provide proof that the Irish looked to the Vulgate for chronology; it does provide further confirmation that there was a range of chronological systems in use in the Insular World at this time, and that chronology was a lively, engaging and, oftentimes, contentious subject. Bede's unexpectedly divisive chronological experimentation takes place against this backdrop.

Why did Bede use Vulgate chronology?

As we have seen, the consensus view in modern scholarship is that Bede presented a shorter span of world history in his chronicles because he wished to remove the *annus praesens* from its proximity to AM 6000 and thereby defuse contemporary apocalypticism – rather than AD 703 corresponding to AM 5904, it was AM 4655 in Bede's new chronology.[148] In Chapter One, I argued that *De temporibus* was composed in 703 because of its significance as a base year for computists and annalists as the first year of a 19-year cycle. Discussions of chronology were also prominent at this time because many believed that the world had entered its last century. Faith Wallis has argued that such beliefs triggered a countdown fever in the early eighth century.[149] Bede, so the argument goes, looked to the Vulgate for chronology in 703 in response to such views. However, while apocalypticism appears to have been rife in this period, I believe it was a secondary consideration for Bede. His interest appears to be in eschatology rather than apocalypticism at this stage of his career, as can be seen from his contemporary commentary on Revelation, and although he must have been aware of apocalyptic views in 703, such anxieties are almost entirely absent in *De temporibus*.[150] The chronicle, and work, ends with the famous line: 'The rest of the sixth age is known to God alone' (*Reliquum sextae aetatis Deo soli patet*).[151] This discourages eschatological speculations, but it is not aggressively anti-apocalyptic and is believed to have been influenced by Isidore's chronicles.[152] In contrast to Bede's fiery rhetoric in the letter to Plegwin and *De temporum ratione*, this is positively phlegmatic. The furore surrounding the first publication of *De temporibus* and Bede's vigorous defence in the letter to Plegwin has

skewed the debate about his choice of chronology ever since 708, as the evidence is essentially read backwards.

Resistance to the apocalyptic argument is not denying the widespread acceptance of Septuagint world chronology in the Insular World, especially the Septuagint chronology of Prosper-Victorius that is clearly associated with the Victorian Easter table; indeed, the evidence indicates that Bede was familiar with this association. His opposition to Victorius is well known, and *De temporibus* was written in support of the Dionysian Easter,[153] so it should not be surprising that Bede also rejected Victorian chronology, especially when it challenged his theological beliefs. Along with Septuagint world chronology, Victorius promulgated the Passion date of XV Tiberius, which I have elsewhere argued was problematic for Bede, as he believed that Christ's public ministry lasted for over three years, following John's gospel.[154] He recorded in *De temporibus*: 'Tiberius ruled for twenty-three years. The Lord was crucified in the eighteenth year of his reign' (*Tiberius ann. XXIII. Huius ann. XVIII Dominus crucifigitur*).[155] When discussing the chronology of Christ's life in the later *De temporum ratione*, he rejected the short ministry hypothesis and explicitly asserted that Christ's public mission lasted over three years.[156] In adopting a different world chronology to that associated with Victorius's Easter table, Bede could avoid the problematic Passion date of 5,228 years from Creation and break with the established conventions of Victorius's AM chronology. The explanation of his position comes later, in *De temporum ratione*, but his belief in the long ministry is clearly expressed in *De temporibus*, and in this Bede did dramatically diverge from the mainstream tradition of the western church. This indicates, again, that in attempting to understand why Bede opted for Vulgate chronology, we must pay attention to theology as well as chronology.

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, Bede did not comment on his choice of chronology in *De temporibus*, except when it differed from the Septuagint, and he identified it as according to the Hebrews. Bede's version of the Hebrew scriptures was Jerome's fourth-century translation now referred to as the Vulgate.[157] Jerome began his major translation programme in about 390 having, by all accounts, lost faith in the tradition of the Septuagint and concluded that the only satisfactory Bible for Christians was one that reproduced the Hebrew original.[158] This was after years of scriptural study especially on variant biblical traditions in an effort to improve Latin translations of the Septuagint. He seems to have been particularly concerned that certain passages in the New Testament referred to Old Testament texts not preserved in the Septuagint. He addressed this in the preface to *Quaestiones Hebraicae in Genesim*, written c. 392, and intended to outline divergences between the Septuagint and Hebrew scriptures. Jerome noted that the Evangelists and Paul 'quote many things as if from the Old Testament, which are not contained in our codices'.[159] Jerome returned to this idea at greater length in defending his translation project in the Pentateuch preface, where he offered several examples in support of his argument.[160] One of the most famous of these is in John's account of the Crucifixion, when the piercing of Christ's side with a lance is presented as in fulfilment of biblical prophecy: 'And again

another scripture saith: They shall look on him whom they pierced' (*Et iterum alia Scriptura dicit: Videbunt in quem transfixerunt*).[161] In restoring these verses to the canon of scripture, Jerome argued he was helping Christians to see Christ in the Old Testament.[162]

Jerome appears to have been aware that his translation venture would be poorly received, writing in his preface to Isaiah that he thrust his hand into the flame with his eyes open.[163] Jerome's concerns proved accurate as many luminaries of the fourth-century Church, such as Augustine and Rufinus, greeted his new translation with dismay.[164] A major concern was that he would drive a wedge between Greek-speaking and Latin-speaking Christians, by circumventing the Church's traditional regard for the Greek scriptures; just one of the consequences of this was divergence about the age of the world. However, Jerome believed that the authority of scripture overruled all other concerns. To underline the importance of his project, Jerome began calling the Hebrew scriptures the 'Hebrew truth' (*Hebraica veritas*). He did this for the first time in *Questiones Hebraicae in Genesim*, and from then on used that designation in an effort to remove the widespread suspicion and distrust people felt for his new translations.[165]

We know that Jerome's Vulgate translation of the Bible was given special status at Wearmouth-Jarrow, as the famous *Codex Amiatinus*, which left Northumbria for Rome with Abbot Ceolfrith in 716, is a full Vulgate Bible. *Amiatinus* was one of three such Bibles completed at the time; the other two were to remain in Wearmouth and Jarrow, where they could be consulted by members of the community.[166] Single-volume biblical pandects were extraordinarily rare in this period and *Amiatinus* is the earliest complete Vulgate Bible that we are aware of. Ceolfrith and the community at Wearmouth-Jarrow may have been influenced by a single-volume version of the 'old translation' which Ceolfrith had acquired in Rome.[167] This is generally believed to be the now-lost *Codex Grandior*, produced at the monastery of Vivarium in the time of Cassiodorus.[168] Along with adopting Jerome's text of the Bible, the Wearmouth-Jarrow monks also reproduced Jerome's accompanying gospel prefaces (many of which were in the form of letters) in *Amiatinus*, indicating their importance and eloquently testifying to the esteem within which Jerome was held. In further confirmation of these views, Peter Darby has highlighted a quatrain on a page listing all the biblical books featured in *Amiatinus* that expresses the community's admiration for Jerome.[169]

The contemporary evidence from Bede's monastery provides ample context for his decision to turn to the Vulgate for chronology. We do not know how many years the community spent on Ceolfrith's biblical project, or how long before 716 they had completed all three Bibles, but we can assume an endeavour of this scale preoccupied several members of the community over many years, and can infer that the monastery possessed 'Vulgate' translations of all the Old Testament books prior to beginning their programme. The attention given to Jerome's biblical prefaces, and indeed to Jerome himself, in *Amiatinus* also indicates that they had accepted his arguments for the scriptural authority of the Hebrew tradition rather than the Septuagint. Bede's exegetical works further support this view, as he frequently compared divergences between the Septuagint and Hebrew scriptures,

and accepted the 'Hebrew truth' (*Hebraica veritas*), following Jerome. When Bede found his orthodoxy under attack because of his world chronology he defended his position in the letter to Plegwin by appealing to the authority of scripture and various church fathers, including Jerome, Eusebius and Augustine, and referred to the 'Hebrew truth' – a defence he repeated in *De temporum ratione* many years later. It is surprising that he never used the 'Hebrew truth' designation in *De temporibus* itself, instead simply noting that his chronology was according to the Hebrews in contrast to that of the 70; perhaps he believed such an explanation or defence was unnecessary. Nevertheless, the source of his chronology is clear.

In attempting to explain Bede's choice of chronology, the authority of scripture may have been uppermost in his mind, and especially Jerome's arguments for the pre-eminence of the Hebrew over Greek tradition.[170] An unanswerable question in all this is: had the Vulgate chronology been longer, and therefore closer to a putative end of the world, would Bede have opted for that regardless of concerns about contemporary apocalypticism? As the evidence indicates the integrity of scripture, not apocalypticism, was of greatest concern to Bede, in my view the answer is yes. This can perhaps be demonstrated in an examination of Bede's use of *Anno Mundi* chronology in *De temporibus*. As noted at the outset of this chapter, Bede only dated one event – the Nativity – using AM chronology in the whole chronicle, and in that case provided the number of years according to both traditions:

> *Octauianus ann. LVI. Huius anno XLII Dominus nascitur, conpletis ab Adam annis IIIDCCCCLII, iuxta alios VCXCVIIII.*
>
>   Octavian reigned for fifty-six years. Our Lord was born in the forty-second year of his reign, when three thousand nine hundred and fifty-two (or according to others, five thousand one hundred and ninety-nine) years had passed since Adam.[171]

Had forestalling AM 6000 been Bede's explicit concern, it is surprising that he would remind the reader of the other tradition at this point; in contrast, in *De temporum ratione*, where he is overtly anti-apocalyptic, he made no concession to Septuagint chronology in his announcement of the Incarnation. Bede's presentation in *De temporibus* is more reminiscent of someone comparing alternative traditions – as he frequently did in his exegesis – and opting for the more authoritative one, the 'Hebrew truth', without needing to ignore or denigrate the Greek translation. This is also in keeping with the wide variety of chronological systems found in world chronicles, as one chronological choice need not impute the alternatives. The second element that may indicate a lack of concern about apocalyptic anxieties is the absence of AM years in the rest of the chronicle. As argued in Chapter Two, ages and generations provide the chronological structure for the chronicle. Bede's sparing use of AM years suggests he opted for the Vulgate chronology due to theological rather than chronographical concerns. This hypothesis can, perhaps, be further supported by the mathematical inaccuracies in Bede's chronology of the sixth age. He noted that 703 years of the sixth age had

elapsed at his time of writing: a date that is accurate, and can be confirmed using the Dionysian *argumenta* that provide the *annus praesens* in *DT* 14.[172] However, if one calculates the number of years according to the information provided in the chronicle the total adds up to 715.[173] This discrepancy can be relatively easily explained by the regnal years Bede used which are whole-year numbers and likely to have been rounded up.[174] In contrast, in *De temporum ratione*, in which AM years are the major chronological system, reigns in the sixth age are given according to years and months. We know that Bede had received additional sources in the intervening 22 years, and their impact on his thought will be discussed in the next chapter; however, a greater accuracy in AM year dates was essential for the second chronicle, while not being a priority for the first.

Conclusion

Although Bede's AM years may not have been the most important feature of the *De temporibus* chronicle, the reaction to this chronology has dominated all subsequent discussions of this work. In defending himself against a spurious charge of heresy, Bede roundly attacked his critics and all forms of apocalypticism, and subsequently presented his chronology in opposition to apocalyptic speculations. Due to the reaction to *De temporibus* and Bede's furious defence, the consensus in modern scholarship is that Bede drastically diverged from the mainstream chronicle tradition because of his concerns about contemporary apocalypticism. However, the absence of apocalyptic anxieties in *De temporibus* challenges this view. While Bede was unquestionably an opponent of such speculations, the evidence that it was a preoccupation of his does not appear in his writings until after the charge of heresy was levelled in 708, which leads to a departure from his earlier presentation of chronology, when he was more concerned with following the Hebrews, that is, Jerome's Vulgate translation. This assertion can be supported by his minimal and judicious use of AM years throughout the 'Chronicle of 703' and the lack of concern with which he provided the Septuagint age of the world alongside the Vulgate in his notice for the Nativity. Bede's decision to use Vulgate rather than Septuagint chronology clearly shocked many of his contemporaries and led to unpleasant unintended consequences. However, the reaction does not change the fact that his original decision was almost certainly inspired by theological rather than chronographical considerations, and his chronological experimentation was perfectly in keeping with the lively and dynamic nature of chronicle writing in the late antique and early medieval worlds.

Notes

1   *De temporibus* [*DT*] 22, lines 2–4, ed. T. Mommsen in C.W. Jones, *CCSL* 123C (Turnhout 1980) pp. 585–611 at 607; tr. Kendall and Wallis, *Bede: On the Nature of Things*, p. 126: *Octauianus ann. LVI. Huius anno XLII Dominus nascitur, conpletis ab Adam annis IIIDCCCCLII, iuxta alios VCXCVIIII.*
2   See Chapter Two for discussion of the ages of the world.
3   *DT* 22, line 2, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 607. Some manuscripts of *De temporibus* have 709 years; for discussion of this discrepancy, see Kendall and Wallis, *Bede:*

On the Nature of Things, p. 126, note 217; Masako Ohashi, '*Sexta aetas continet annos praeteritos DCCVIIII* (Bede, *De temporibus* 22): A scribal error?' in G. Jaritz and G. Moreno-Riaño (eds.), *Time and Eternity: The Medieval Discourse* (Turnhout 2003) pp. 55–62; and *eadem*., 'The *Annus Domini* and the *sexta aetas*: Problems in the transmission of Bede's *De temporibus*,' in I. Warntjes and D. Ó Cróinín (eds.), *Computus and Its Cultural Context in the Latin West, AD 300–1200: Proceedings of the 1st International Conference on the Science of Computus in Ireland and Europe, Galway, 14–16 July, 2006* (Turnhout 2010) pp. 190–203.

4 *Epistola ad Pleguinam*, ed. C.W. Jones, *CCSL* 123C (Turnhout 1980) pp. 617–26. On the letter to Plegwin, see Darby, *Bede and the End of Time*, pp. 35–64; and *idem*., 'Heresy and authority in Bede's *Letter to Plegwine*,' in S. DeGregorio and P. Kershaw (eds.), *Cities, Saints and Communities in Early Medieval Europe* (forthcoming).

5 For a long-term view of the development of the world chronicle tradition, see Burgess and Kulikowski, *Mosaics of Time*; see also Ian Wood, 'Universal chronicles in the early medieval West,' pp. 47–60.

6 On background to the Christian chronographic tradition, see A.A. Mosshammer, *The Chronicle of Eusebius and Greek Chronographic Tradition* (London 1979) and *idem*., *Easter Computus*; R.W. Burgess, *Studies in Eusebian and Post-Eusebian Chronography* (Stuttgart 1999); and Brian Croke, 'The origins of the christian world chronicle,' in B. Croke and A.M. Emmett (eds.), *History and Historians in Late Antiquity* (Sydney and Oxford 1983) pp. 116–31.

7 These were chronological compilations based on the Roman practise of selecting two consuls each year who gave their names to the year; on evidence for consuls in this period and the utility of consular lists for chronology, see R.S. Bagnall, A. Cameron, S.R. Swartz and K.A. Worp, *Consuls of the Later Roman Empire* (Atlanta, GA 1987), and the critical review of this book by R.W. Burgess, 'Consuls and Consular dating in the Later Roman Empire,' *Phoenix* 43.2 (1989) pp. 143–57. Specific examples of consular lists are presented in this chapter.

8 Ed. T. Mommsen, *MGH Auctores antiquissimi*, 9, *Chronica Minora*, 1 (Munich 1981) pp. 39–148. The original manuscript has disappeared, as has a famous ninth-century Carolingian copy, but much of its contents have been preserved in copies of either the original or the Carolingian versions, along with detailed early modern descriptions of the Carolingian copy; see Salzman, *On Roman Time*, pp. 4 and 249–68.

9 In addition to the *Liber Generationis*, it contained information about imperial, astrological and pagan religious activities; lists of consuls, urban prefects of Rome and bishops of Rome; an Easter table from 312 to 411; depositions of the bishops of Rome and depositions of martyrs; catalogue of buildings and monuments in Rome; and a chronicle of the city of Rome. For discussion of the contents of the codex, see Mommsen, *Chronica Minora*, 1 pp. 15–38; and Salzman, *On Roman Time*, esp. pp. 23–60.

10 Burgess and Kulikowski, *Mosaics of Time*, pp. 6 and 357–58.

11 Burgess and Kulikowski, *Mosaics of Time*, e.g., p. 268.

12 In discussing Eusebius's years from Abraham, most attention is focussed on the discrepancy between the Hebrew scriptures and the Septuagint; however, it is plausible that Eusebius was more concerned by the relative brevity of Judaeo-Christian history compared to Egyptian and Babylonian traditions, see William Adler, *Time Immemorial: Archaic History and Its Sources in Christian Chronography, from Julius Africanus to George Syncellus* (Washington 1989) pp. 47–51 and 66–71; and J.W. Johnson, 'Chronological writing: Its concepts and development,' *History and Theory* 2.2 (1962) pp. 126–28. A.T. Grafton, 'Joseph Scaliger and historical chronology: The rise and fall of a discipline,' *History and Theory* 14.2 (1975) pp. 156–85.

13 On the date of Eusebius's chronicle, see R.W. Burgess, 'The dates and editions of Eusebius's *Chronici canones* and *Historia ecclesiastica*,' *Journal of Theological Studies* n.s. 48 (1997) pp. 471–504; repr. in R.W. Burgess, *Chronicles, Consuls, and Coins: Historiography and History in the Later Roman Empire* (Farnham 2011) I.

14 Eusebius-Jerome, *Chronicon*, ed. Helm, *Griechische Christliche Schriftsteller*. Eusebius's original work has been lost. Book Two survives in Jerome's translation, and Book One is in an Armenian recension. See Burgess and Kulikowski, *Mosaics of Time*, pp. 119–31. Kelly, *Jerome*, pp. 68–75.

15 On the complexities of this chronicle, see R.W. Burgess, 'Jerome explained: An introduction to his *Chronicle* and a guide to its use,' *Ancient History Bulletin* 16 (2002) pp. 1–32; repr. in Burgess, *Chronicles, Consuls, and Coins*, III.

16 See Luke 3:1 and 3:21–3, which records that John the Baptist began his ministry during the fifteenth year of Tiberius and Christ was baptised by John soon after, when he was about 30. On discussion of this date, see Mosshammer, *Easter Computus*, p. 18.

17 Eusebius-Jerome, *Chronicon*, ed. Helm, pp. 173–74. See Appendix 2, 'Table of key chronological events in the Chronicle of Eusebius and Jerome'.

18 Eusebius's formulation was subsequently replaced by the six world ages framework popularised by Augustine and discussed in Chapter Two; see Wallis, *Bede: The Reckoning of Time*, pp. 355–56.

19 Eusebius-Jerome, *Chronicon*, ed. Helm, pp. 169 (birth) and 174 (Passion). Eusebius's date for the Passion comes from John's gospel which indicates that Christ's mission lasted for at least three years as he celebrated three Passovers with his disciples. In contrast, the synoptic gospels imply Christ's mission lasted only a matter of months and he was crucified in the same year as his Baptism. Eusebius discussed this problem in his *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 1.10, ed. G. Bardy, *Eusèbe de Césarée, Histoire Ecclésiastique, SC 31* (Paris 1952) pp. 35–36. On this contentious issue, see Mosshammer, *Easter Computus*, pp. 336–38; G. Declercq, *Anno Domini: The Origins of the Christian Era* (Turnhout 2000) pp. 14–15.

20 Kelly, *Jerome*, p. 74.

21 Eusebius-Jerome, *Chronicon*, ed. Helm, p. 250. See Appendix 2, 'Table of key chronological events in the Chronicle of Eusebius and Jerome'. On these 'chronological Linchpins,' see also Burgess, 'Jerome explained,' pp. 20–21.

22 Kelly, *Jerome*, p. 74; M. Miller, 'The Chronological structure of the sixth age in the Rawlinson fragment of the "Irish World-Chronicle",' *Celtica* 22 (1991) pp. 79–111 at 81.

23 Sulpicius Severus, *Chroniques*, ed. G. de Senneville-Grave (Paris 1999). For discussion of the chronicle, see C. Stancliffe, *St Martin and His Hagiographer: History and Miracle in Sulpicius Severus* (Oxford 1983) pp. 174–82; and M.S. Williams, 'Time and authority in the *Chronicle* of Sulpicius Severus,' in A. Lianeri (ed.), *The Western Time of Ancient History: Historiographical Encounters with the Greek and Roman Pasts* (Cambridge 2011) pp. 280–97.

24 On Sulpicius' possible reasons for this, see Williams, 'Time and authority in the *Chronicle* of Sulpicius Severus,' pp. 284–88.

25 Sulpicius Severus, *Chroniques*, book 2.27. See Stancliffe, *St Martin and His Hagiographer*, p. 180: 'Sulpicius' narrative lacks any idea of progress culminating in the Incarnation'.

26 Up to the fourth century Christ's incarnation was often dated to c. AM 5500, when this was amended to c. AM 5200; see Mosshammer, *Easter Computus*, pp. 357–421. Richard Landes has suggested this was due to apocalyptic concerns about the approaching year 6000, which could be forestalled by re-dating the Incarnation: 'Lest the Millennium Be Fulfilled: apocalyptic expectations and the pattern of Western chronography 100–800 CE,' in *The Use and Abuse of Eschatology in the Middle Ages*, eds. W. Verbeke, C. Verhelst and A. Welkenhuysen (Leuven 1988) pp. 137–211.

27 Williams, 'Time and authority in the *Chronicle* of Sulpicius Severus,' pp. 283–84; Stancliffe, *St Martin and his hagiographer*, pp. 178–81.

28 Prosper, *Epitoma Chronicon*, ed. T. Mommsen, *MGH Auctores antiquissimi*, 9, *Chronica Minora*, 1 (Munich 1981) pp. 385–485. Burgess and Kulikowski, *Mosaics of Time*,

p. 40. On Prosper, see S. Muhlberger, *The Fifth-Century Chroniclers: Prosper, Hydatius, and the Gallic Chronicler of 452* (Cambridge 1981, repr. 2006) pp. 48–135.

29 Prosper, *Epitoma Chronicon*, 13, p. 386. The only other examples I have identified prior to Bede's *De temporibus* are the *Liber Generationis* in the *Chronograph of 354*, and the 'Fredegar compilation's abridgement of the *Chronograph of 354*'s *Liber Generationis*, ed. Mommsen, pp. 92–94 and 129–30; see further below for 'Fredegar compilation'. On generations as a method for measuring time, see Chapter Two.

30 Victorius of Aquitaine, *Cyclus Paschali*, ed. Krusch, *Studien* II, pp. 27–52. See further in this chapter for discussion of Victorius and AP.

31 Prosper, *Epitoma Chronicon*, 380–85, p. 409. See Appendix 2, 'Table of key chronological events in the Chronicle of Eusebius and Jerome'.

32 Prosper, *Epitoma Chronicon*, 386, p. 409.

33 See note 19.

34 Prosper, *Epitoma Chronicon*, 388–91, pp. 409–10: *Fufio Geminio et Rubellio Gemino consulibus*. See later in this chapter for further discussion of dates for the Passion.

35 Ed. and tr. in R.W. Burgess, *The* Chronicle *of Hydatius and the* Consularia Constantinopolitana*: Two Contemporary Accounts of the Final Years of the Roman Empire* (Oxford 1993) pp. 70–123.

36 *Chronicle of Hydatius*, §5, pp. 72–75.

37 For an in-depth discussion of Hydatius's chronicle, see Muhlberger, *The Fifth-Century Chroniclers*, pp. 193–266.

38 *The Breviarium ab urbe condita of Eutropius: the right honourable secretary of state for general petitions*, tr. H.W. Bird (Liverpool 1993). The *Consularia Constantinopolitana*, ed. Burgess, *The Chronicle of Hydatius and the Consularia Constantinopolitana*, pp. 215–45.

39 *Consularia Constantinopolitana*, ed. Burgess, p. 227. On the compilation of consular lists in this period, see M. Klaassen, 'The *Fasti Parisini*: an independent consular list from the fifth century,' *Journal of Late Antiquity* 5.1 (2012) pp. 145–65.

40 Augustine, *Confessions*, ed. L. Verheijen, *CCSL* 27 (Turnhout 1981). See J. Pelikan, *The Mystery of Continuity: Time and History, Memory and Eternity in the Thought of Saint Augustine* (Charlottesville, VA 1986). Cf. *De Ciuitate Dei*, 18:43, ed. B. Dombert and A. Kolb, *De Civitate Dei, Libri XI – XXII*, *CCSL* 48 (Turnhout 1985).

41 See Chapter Two for discussion of Augustine's Six Ages of the World and its importance for later chroniclers. See later in this chapter for Isidore's chronicles. On different divisions of time in this period, see Darby, *Bede and the End of Time*, pp. 24–28.

42 See Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, 22:30, lines 130–38, ed. Dombert and Kolb, pp. 865–66; *De Diversis Quaestionibus* LXXXIII, 58.2, lines 61–72, ed. A. Mutzenbecher, *CCSL* 44A (Turnhout 1975) pp. 106–7.

43 Orosius, *Historiarum adversum paganos libri VII*, ed. C. Zangemeister (Leipzig 1889): Orosius's preface refers to Augustine's role, ed. Zangemeister, p. 1.

44 Orosius placed the foundation of Rome in 752 BC, in the sixth Olympiad and 414 years after the fall of Troy (Book 2.4.1, ed. Zangemeister, p. 88): on this date, see A.T. Fear, 'Introduction,' *Orosius: Seven Books of Histories Against the Pagans* (Liverpool 2010) p. 18.

45 Orosius, *Historiarum* 1.4.1, ed. Zangemeister, p. 42. He also occasionally used Olympiads to date pre-Roman history.

46 Orosius, *Historiarum*, 1.1.5–6, 1.21.20, 7.2.4–7, ed. Zangemeister, pp. 44–48, 79 and 435.

47 See, e.g., Appian, *Civil Wars* 4:4, tr. H. White, *Roman History, Vol. IV: The Civil Wars, Books 3.27–5* (Cambridge, MA 1913) pp. 146–47; and for discussion of eras in Roman thought, see F. Santangelo, *Divination, Prediction and the End of the Roman Republic* (Cambridge 2013) pp. 115–27. I am grateful to Chris Mowat for discussion of this theme.

48 An Old English version of Orosius was written sometime in the late ninth or early tenth centuries, indicating the work's popularity and value: M.R. Godden (ed. and tr.), *The Old English History of the World: An Anglo-Saxon rewriting of Orosius* (Cambridge, MA; and London 2016).

49 See Luke 2:1; Origen, *Contra Celsum*, 2.30, ed. M. Borret, *Contre Celse, I (Livres I et II)*, *SC* 132 (Paris 2005) pp. 360–62; Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 1.5–6 and 8, ed. Bardy, pp. 21–25 and 30. Cf. Prosper of Aquitaine, *De Vocatione omnium gentium*, 2.16, *PL* 51.648–722 at 704; Leo the Great, *Sermo* 82.2 (Recension B), ed. A. Chavasse, *CCSL* 138A (Turnhout 1973) pp. 510–11. See R.A. Markus, 'Chronicle and theology: Prosper of Aquitaine,' in C. Holdsworth and T.P. Wiseman (eds.), *The Inheritance of Historiography 350–900* (Exeter 1986) pp. 31–43 at 38–39, and Chapter Four.

50 Cassiodorus, *Chronica*, ed. T. Mommsen, *MGH Auctores antiquissimi*, 11, *Chronica Minora*, 2 (Berlin 1894) pp. 120–61. See A.S. Christensen, *Cassiodorus, Jordanes and the History of the Goths* (Copenhagen 2002) pp. 57–62; Y. Hen, *Roman Barbarians: The Royal Court and Culture in the Early Medieval West* (Basingstoke 2007) pp. 45 and 47–48.

51 See Mommsen, 'Introduction,' to Cassiodorus, *Chronica*, pp. 111–17.

52 Cassiodorus, *Chronica*, §596 and 635, ed. Mommsen, pp. 135 and 137.

53 Cassiodorus is counting from the Flood to the beginning of Ninus's reign rather than to the birth of Abraham, the more usual marker of time in Christian chronicles and the beginning of the third world age for those using such designations.

54 Cassiodorus, *Chronica*, §1365–71, ed. Mommsen, p. 161.

55 In synchronising Cassiodorus' calculations with our chronology, Christ's birth occurred in c. AD 31.

56 Cassiodorus, *Chronica*, §632–6, ed. Mommsen, pp. 136–37. Prosper, *Epitoma Chronicon*, 391, ed. Mommsen, p. 410. Victorius of Aquitaine followed Prosper for his consular list in the *Cursus Paschalis*, and this has also been regarded as one of Cassiodorus' sources: Christensen, *Cassiodorus*, pp. 59–60.

57 *Fasti Consulares* in *Chronograph of 354*, ed. T. Mommsen, *MGH Auctores antiquissimi*, 9, *Chronica Minora*, 1 (Munich 1981) pp. 50–61 at 57. *Consularia Constantinopolitana*, ed. Burgess, p. 227. Burgess argued that Prosper and Hydatius had a version of the *Consularia* that was similar but not identical to the one that has come down to us: *The Chronicle of Hydatius and the Consularia Constantinopolitana*, pp. 200–1.

58 Cassiodorus, *Institutiones*, ed. R.A.B. Mynors (Oxford 1937) book 2, *prefatio*. Cassiodorus and Vivarium played an important role in disseminating Dionysius Exiguus' Easter table; see Cuppo, 'Felix of Squillace and the Dionysiac Computus I,' pp. 110–36, and Chapters One and Six.

59 Cassiodorus, *Institutiones*, book 1:17 (2).

60 Marcellinus Comes, *Chronicon*, ed. T. Mommsen, *MGH Auctores antiquissimi*, 11, *Chronica Minora*, 2 (Berlin 1894) pp. 60–108; ed. and tr. in B. Croke, *The Chronicle of Marcellinus: A Translation and Commentary* (Sydney 1995).

61 Marcellinus Comes, *Chronicon*, *praefatio*, ed. Mommsen, p. 60; tr. Croke, p. 1.

62 Victor of Tonnena, *Chronicon*, ed. C.C. de Hartmann, *CCSL* 173A (Turnhout 2001).

63 Victor of Tonnena, *Chronicon*, line 996, ed. de Hartman, p. 55.

64 Mosshammer, *Easter Computus*, p. 31. See Chapter Six for the development of AD years and their dissemination in Dionysian Easter tables.

65 *Chronica maiora*, ed. J.C. Martín, *CCSL* 112 (Turnhout 2003). See Martín, 'Introduction,' pp. 119–242 on the two redactions of this chronicle. J. Fontaine also argued for two redactions of the *Chronica maiora*, but dated these to 616 and 629: *Isidore de Séville*, p. 224. See also Koon and Wood, 'The *Chronica Maiora* of Isidore of Seville,' (http://e-spania.revues.org/15552)

66 *Etymologiae*, ed. W.M. Lindsay (Oxford 1911); tr. S.T. Barney et al. (Cambridge 2006) pp. 130–33.

67 Koon and Wood, 'The *Chronica Maiora* of Isidore of Seville'.

68 See Koon and Wood on Isidore implanting this innovation into the second redaction: 'The *Chronica Maiora* of Isidore of Seville'. See Chapter Two for discussion of the six ages of the world.

69 See Prosper, *Epitoma Chronicon*, 386, ed. Mommsen, p. 409, and earlier.

70 Isidore, *Chronica maiora*, 239, ed. Martin, pp. 110 and 113. He was less precise in the *Chronia Minora*, merely dating the Crucifixion to the reign of Tiberius: *Etymologiae*, book 5.39 (26).

71 For discussion of the relationship between the 'Fredegar compilation' and the eighth-century continuation, *Historia vel Gesta Francorum*, see Collins, *Die Fredegar-Chroniken*, pp. 1–7. For detailed analysis of the structure, authorship and manuscripts of the first part, the 'Fredegar compilation,' see pp. 8–81. See also W. Goffart, 'The Fredegar problem reconsidered,' *Speculum* 38 (1963) pp. 206–41, repr. in W. Goffart, *Rome's Fall and After* (London 1989) pp. 319–54.

72 See Collins, *Die Fredegar-Chroniken*, pp. 25–26.

73 *Chronicarum quae dicuntur Fredegarii scholastic Libri IV*, ed. B. Krusch, *MGH Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum*, 2 (Hannover 1888) pp. 18–168. J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The fourth book of the chronicle of Fredegar: With Its Continuations* (London 1960) pp. 1–79.

74 See recently on this, Collins, *Die Fredegar-Chroniken*, pp. 27–29.

75 Fredegar, book 1.1–24, ed. Krusch, pp. 20–33.

76 Fredegar, book 1.24, ed. Krusch, p. 34. See Collins, *Die Fredegar-Chroniken*, pp. 31–32.

77 Fredegar, book 1.25, ed. Krusch, pp. 34–36. His papal list is close to the *Liber Ponticalis*, but not identical; see Collins, *Die Fredegar-Chroniken*, p. 31.

78 Fredegar, book 1.26, ed. Krusch, p. 37, most probably taken from Isidore, according to Krusch, notes to p. 37 and Collins, *Die Fredegar-Chroniken*, p. 31. See also Goffart, 'The Fredegar problem reconsidered'.

79 Fredegar, book 1.26, ed. Krusch, pp. 38–42.

80 Fredegar, book 1.16, ed. Krusch, pp. 28–9. In book 1.17 a year count from Adam to the present day of AM 5738 is included. This is taken directly from the *Liber Generationis*, which dated the Incarnation to AM 5500 and returns a date of c. 238 in our chronology, approximately when the *Liber Generationis* was completed: *Chronograph of 354*, §315, ed. Mommsen, p. 131. See Chapter Two for using generations to count time.

81 Fredegar, book 2, ed. Krusch, pp. 42–88.

82 Fredegar, book 2.49, ed. Krusch, p. 69. See Collins, *Die Fredegar-Chroniken*, p. 38.

83 Fredegar, book 3, ed. Krusch, pp. 88–118.

84 Fredegar, book 4, ed. Krusch, pp. 118–68. On the complications in using Merovingian regnal dates in this period, see Collins, *Die Fredegar-Chroniken*, pp. 44–46.

85 See Fredegar, book 1.16–17 and 24, 2.34, ed. Krusch, pp. 29, 34, and 58.

86 E.g., *Chronograph of 354*: *Fasti Consulares*, p. 57; *Episcopi Romani*, p. 73; and *Liber Generationis*, p. 130.

87 *Chronicarum*, book 1.24 and 2.34, ed. Krusch, pp. 34 and 58.

88 *Chronicarum*, book 2.34, ed. Krusch, p. 58.

89 It is notable that early medieval chronicles date from creation, whereas Late Antique proponents all use Roman forms of dating – e.g., Olympiads, AUC, consular years, imperial reigns and indictions – though most acknowledge the age of the world. As the Roman Empire in the West collapsed, new ways of understanding the past and present were required. For Christians, counting time from Adam appears to have been one of those responses; see further in Chapter Six. I am grateful to John Drinkwater and members of the University of Sheffield's Late Antiquity Reading Group for discussion of this point.

90 See, e.g., the work of Jennifer O'Reilly on Insular Art, and Éamonn Ó Carragáin on the liturgy.

91 See, most recently, the work of Dáibhí Ó Cróinín and Immo Warntjes; Chapter One contextualises these Irish achievements.

92 See, e.g., *De ratione conputandi*, ed. D. Ó Cróinín in Walsh and Ó Cróinín, *Cummian's Letter*, pp. 115–213; *Munich Computus*, ed. and tr. with commentary by I. Warntjes (Stuttgart 2010); and the computus collection in the famous '*Sirmond* manuscript' (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodleian 309); see Chapter One for discussion. On disputes between proponents of the Victorian and Dionysian Easters and another Easter Controversy in Ireland, see Warntjes, 'Victorius vs Dionysius,' pp. 33–97.

93 *Munich Computus*, ed. Warntjes, c. 41, lines 107–10, pp. 140–41. For the Victorian cycle, see *Cyclus Paschali*, ed. Krusch, p. 33. The *Munich Computus* is dated to 718/9 and this *annus praesens* of 689 is believed to represent an earlier 'Victorian Computus of AD 689', which was an important source for the compiler of *Munich*, and sections of this were incorporated within the work. See Warntjes, *Munich Computus*, pp. LVII–LVIII and CXXIV–CXXVI.

94 The dating clause is within the 'computistical bits' transcribed and discussed in D. Ó Cróinín, 'Bede's Irish computus,' in D. Ó Cróinín, *Early Irish History and Chronology*, Section 8, pp. 201–12 at 209–10; see also M. MacCarron, 'Bede, Irish *computistica* and *Annus mundi*,' *Early Medieval Europe* 23.3 (2015) pp. 290–307 at 294–95.

95 See Chapter One for discussion of *Sirmond*'s importance for Bede.

96 *Prologus Victorius*, ch. 9, ed. Krusch, p. 24: *Passum autem dominum nostrum Iesum Christum peractis ab ortu mundi quinque milibus ducentis viginti et octo annis, eadem chronicorum relatione monstratur.* Bartholomew MacCarthy confirmed by a series of mathematical calculations that Victorius dated the Passion to AM 5229: *The Codex Palatino-Vaticanus, No. 830* (Dublin 1892) pp. 365–67.

97 *De ratione conputandi*, ed. Ó Cróinín; *Munich Computus*, ed. Warntjes; and I. Warntjes, 'A newly discovered prologue of AD 699,' pp. 255–84 at 272. I discussed the AM chronology in these sources in MacCarron, 'Bede, Irish *computistica* and *Annus mundi*', pp. 298–300. The actual AM date is difficult to determine as it is unclear whether they mean AM 5228, or if they are following Victorius exactly and recognise that the Passion occurred in AM 5229. For this reason, I will continue to reflect their language rather than opt for the cleaner, but potentially less accurate, AM formula.

98 Ps-Augustine (Augustinus Hibernicus), *De mirabilibus sacrae scripturae*, *PL* 35.2149–200 at 2175; *Anonymus ad Cuimnanum*, ed. B. Bischoff and B. Löfstedt, *CCSL* 133D (Turnhout 1992) lines 51–52, p. 2. I am grateful to Jason O'Rorke for bringing this text to my attention.

99 For discussion of the date of ps-Augustine, *De mirabilibus*, see Warntjes, *Munich Computus*, pp. LXXVIII–LXXIX.

100 For discussion of ps-Augustine's 'Twelve Cycles' and how they relate to AM years, see MacCarron, 'Bede, Irish *computistica* and *Annus mundi*', pp. 296–97.

101 See MacCarthy, *The Codex Palatino-Vaticanus*, pp. 365–67.

102 In Year 93, 25 March falls on a Sunday with full moon (*luna xiv*) on Thursday, 29 March. On discussions of the date of Creation in relation to chronology, see Nothaft, *Dating the Passion*, pp. 74–83.

103 Nothaft, *Dating the Passion*, pp. 60–62. Nothaft also notes that Hippolytus 'invented' computistical chronology, that is, using luni-solar calendar cycles to generate chronographic data, pp. 55–56.

104 *Munich Computus*, c. 68, ed. Warntjes, pp. 314–17. Warntjes has argued that the final six chapters (cc. 63–68) were taken directly from the Victorian exemplar, pp. CXXIV–CXXV.

105 *Munich Computus*, c. 44, lines 18–36, ed. Warntjes, pp. 146–49.

106 *Munich Computus*, c. 44, lines 37–80, ed. Warntjes, pp. 148–53. His calculations led to Easter Sunday falling on 28 March and *luna* xvii, which matches Victorius' calendar date for the Passion but not his lunar age. His AM dates for the Exodus and Passion are at c. 64, lines 2–6, ed. Warntjes, pp. 298–99.

107 Warntjes, *Munich Computus*, c. 44, notes on lines 37–54, p. 148.

108 *Prologus Victorius*, c. 9, ed. Krusch, pp. 24–25.

109 Ó Cróinín, 'Bede's Irish computus,' section 8, pp. 209–10. See MacCarron, 'Bede, Irish *computistica* and *Annus mundi*,' pp. 294–95. For further examples of computistical countdowns, see Landes, 'Lest the Millennium be fulfilled,' pp. 169 and 190–91; and I. Warntjes, 'The final countdown and the reform of the liturgical calendar in the early Middle Ages,' in M. Gabriele and J. Palmer (eds.), *Apocalypse and Reform from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages* (London 2019) pp. 51–75.

110 For discussion of the origins and development of what he has termed 'chronological millennialism', see Warntjes, 'The final countdown and the reform of the liturgical calendar in the early Middle Ages'.

111 See Chapter Two; Darby, *Bede and the End of Time*, pp. 17–42; and Warntjes, 'The final countdown and the reform of the liturgical calendar in the early Middle Ages'.

112 *Epistola ad Pleguinam*, ed. Jones, pp. 617–26. See Jones, 'Some introductory remarks,' pp. 115–98 at 191–98. Darby, *Bede and the End of Time*, pp. 35–64; and *idem*., 'Heresy and authority in Bede's *Letter to Plegwine*', in which he considers the speed with which Bede wrote and dispatched the letter.

113 *Epistola ad Pleguinam*, c. 17, ed. Jones, p. 626: David is named in the final section. See D. Schaller, 'Der verleumdete David: zum Schlusskapitel von Bedas *Epistola ad Pleguinam*', in F. Wagner, A. Önnerfors and J. Rathofer (eds.), *Literatur und Sprache in europäischen Mittelalter: Festschrift für Karl Langosch* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft 1973) pp. 39–43, who discusses the identity of David and his role in this affair.

114 *Epistola ad Pleguinam*, c. 15, lines 261–66: ed. Jones, p. 624; tr. Wallis, *Bede: The Reckoning of Time*, pp. 405–15 at 413. See Darby, *Bede and the End of Time*, pp. 39–64; J. Palmer, 'Calculating Time and the End of Time in the Carolingian World, c. 740–820,' *EHR* 126 (2011) pp. 1307–31.

115 For discussion of these, see Darby, *Bede and the End of Time*, pp. 47–57.

116 See Ó Cróinín and Mc Carthy, 'The "Lost" Irish 84-year Easter table rediscovered,' pp. 227–42. See also Mc Carthy, 'Easter principles and a fifth-century lunar cycle,' pp. 204–24; Bonnie Blackburn and Leofranc Holford-Strevens, *The Oxford Companion to the Year* (Oxford 1999, repr. 2003) pp. 873–75; and Warntjes, 'The Munich Computus,' pp. 31–85.

117 The first page of this Easter table is reproduced along with a critical edition in Mc Carthy, 'Easter principles and a fifth-century lunar cycle,' pp. 208 and 218–19. Images of the full table are in Warntjes, 'The Munich Computus,' Appendix A, pp. 80–82. For explanation of this chronology, see Ó Cróinín and Mc Carthy, 'The "Lost" Irish 84-year Easter table rediscovered,' pp. 229–30. These data, along with the epact in column 2, allowed Ó Cróinín and Mc Carthy to calculate a small number of possible years for the cycle's first year and with other data led them to date the table's first year to AD 438.

118 Ó Cróinín and Mc Carthy, 'The "Lost" Irish 84-year Easter table rediscovered,' p. 230.

119 Ó Cróinín and Mc Carthy, 'The "Lost" Irish 84-year Easter table rediscovered,' p. 241, note 21.

120 On the origins and development of the Irish annals, see J. Bannerman, 'Notes on the Scottish entries in the early Irish Annals,' *Scottish Gaelic Studies* 2 (1968) pp. 149–70; A.P. Smyth, 'The earliest Irish annals: Their first contemporary entries, and the earliest centres of recording,' *PRIA* 72C (1972) pp. 1–48; G. MacNiocaill, *The Medieval Irish Annals* (Dublin 1975); Ó Cróinín, 'Early Irish annals from Easter tables,' pp. 74–86; repr. in Ó Cróinín, *Early Irish History and Chronology*, pp. 76–86; D.P. Mc Carthy, 'The status of the pre-Patrician Irish Annals,' *Peritia* 12 (1998) pp. 98–152; T.M. Charles-Edwards, 'Introduction,' in Charles-Edwards (tr.), *The Chronicle of Ireland*, Vol. 1 (Liverpool 2006) pp. 1–58; D.P. Mc Carthy, *The Irish Annals: Their Genesis, Evolution and History* (Dublin 2008, repr. 2010) and *idem*., 'The Irish Annals: Their origin and evolution, V to XI sec.,' *L'Irlanda e gli Irlandesi nell'alto Medioevo* (Spoleto 2010) pp. 601–17; N. Evans, *The Present and the Past in*

Medieval Irish Chronicles (Woodbridge 2010); Burgess and Kulikowski, *Mosaics of Time*, pp. 208–21; and R. Flechner, 'The Chronicle of Ireland: Then and now,' *Early Medieval Europe* 21.4 (2013) pp. 422–54.

121 *Annals of Tigernach*, tr. Whitley Stokes, a facsimile reprint, Vol. 1 (Felinfach 1993): this may have been written in the eleventh century and is one of the earliest witnesses to the Irish Annal tradition; *Chronicum Scottorum*, ed. and tr. W.M. Hennessy, Rolls Series 46 (London 1866; repr. Wiesbaden 1964). See D.P. Mc Carthy: 'The chronology and sources of the early Irish annals,' *Early Medieval Europe* 10.3 (2010) pp. 323–41 at 324–31.

122 See D.P. Mc Carthy: 'The chronology of the Irish annals,' *PRIA* 98C (1998) pp. 203–55; 'The chronology and sources of the early Irish annals'; and 'Analysing and restoring the chronology of the Irish Annals,' in R. Kenna, M. MacCarron and P. MacCarron (eds.), *Maths Meets Myths: Quantitative Approaches to Ancient Narratives* (Cham 2017) pp. 177–94; and his collation of annal years, www.irish-annals.cs.tcd.ie/.

123 See Cummian's *De controversia paschali*, esp. lines 259–88, ed. Walsh and Ó Cróinín, pp. 90–94, on the rejection of the 84-year cycle by the southern Irish Church in the early seventh century, and *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People* [*HE*], bk 5, c. 22, ed. and tr. B. Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors (Oxford 1969, repr. 2001) for Iona's acceptance of the Dionysian tables in 716. See Introduction and Chapter One for further discussion.

124 Warntjes, 'A newly discovered Prologue of AD 699,' pp. 267 (n. 32) and 275.

125 See R.L. Poole, *Chronicles and Annals: A Brief Outline of Their Origin and Growth* (Oxford 1926) pp. 27–34; Jones, *Saints' Lives and Chronicles in Early England*; McCormick, *Les Annales du haut moyen âge*; and Ó Cróinín, 'Early Irish annals from Easter tables'. On discussion of the differences in these views, see Newton, *Medieval Chronicles and the Rotation of the Earth*, pp. 44–46.

126 Story, 'The Frankish Annals,' pp. 59–109 at 90–91.

127 H.A. Wilson, ed., *The Calendar of St Willibrord from Paris Lat. 10837: A Facsimile with Transcription, Introduction and Notes*, Henry Bradshaw Society, 55 (London 1918). Story, 'Frankish Annals of Lindisfarne and Kent,' pp. 60–72 for manuscript transmission and 72–74 and 84–100 for discussion of paschal annals alongside other forms of annal writing.

128 R. McKitterick, 'Constructing the past in the early middle ages: The case of the Royal Frankish Annals,' *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6th series, Vol. 7 (1997) pp. 101–29 at 113; see also R. McKitterick, *History and Memory in the Carolingian World* (Cambridge 2004) pp. 97–99.

129 Ó Cróinín has defended the traditional position, 'Early Irish annals from Easter tables'; for other views, see Charles-Edwards, 'Introduction'; Mc Carthy, *The Irish Annals*, and *idem*., 'The Irish Annals: their origin and evolution, V to XI sec.'; Evans, *The Present and the Past*; Burgess and Kulikowski, *Mosaics of Time*, pp. 208–21.

130 See D.P. Mc Carthy and A. Breen, 'An Evaluation of Astronomical Observations in the Irish Annals,' *Vistas in Astronomy* 41.1 (1997) pp. 117–38; and Newton, *Medieval Chronicles and the Rotation of the Earth*, pp. 9 and 181–99. See also D.P. Mc Carthy, 'The origin of the *latercus* paschal cycle of the Insular Celtic churches,' *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 28 (1994) pp. 25–49.

131 J. Morris, 'The Chronicle of Eusebius: Irish fragments,' *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 19 (1972) pp. 80–93, at 83–84.

132 Mc Carthy, *The Irish Annals*, esp. pp. 118–67. See also *idem*., 'The status of the pre-Patrician Irish Annals,' pp. 98–152; 'Bede's primary source for the Vulgate Chronology in his Chronicles in *De temporibus* and *De temporum ratione*,', pp. 159–89; and 'The Irish Annals: Their origin and evolution, V to XI sec.'. See below for Rufinus' opposition to Jerome's Vulgate translation.

133 See Chapter Four for discussion of Bede's sources for the first and second chronicles.

134 See, e.g., the seventh-century Irish commentary on the seven Catholic epistles, which is based on the Vulgate: *Commentarius in Epistolas Catholicas Scotti Anonymi*, ed. R. McNally, *Scriptores Hiberniae minores I*, CCSL 108B (Turnhout 1973) pp. 3–50; other texts in McNally's volume also reveal Jerome's influence on early Irish exegetes. For explicit praise of Jerome, see Columbanus, *Epistula* 1.5, ed. and tr. G.S.M. Walker, *Sancti Columbani Opera*, SLH 2 (Dublin 1957, rep. 1970 and 1997) pp. 2–12 at 8; Cummian, *De controversia paschali*, lines 33–35, 101–3, 137, 146–48, ed. Walsh and Ó Cróinín, pp. 60, 72, 76 and 78; see also D. Meehan, 'Introduction,' *Adomnán*: *De locis sanctis*, ed. Meehan, *SLH* 3 (Dublin 1958, repr. 1983) pp. 1–18 at 14; and J. O'Reilly, 'The Bible as map, on seeing God and finding the way: Pilgrimage and exegesis in Adomnán and Bede,' in M. Boulton, J. Hawkes and H. Stoner (eds.), *Place and Space in the Medieval World* (New York and London 2018) pp. 210–26 at 218.

135 On the influence of Prosper-Victorius on Irish engagement with universal chronology, see Warntjes, 'The final countdown and the reform of the liturgical calendar in the early Middle Ages'.

136 Warntjes, 'A newly discovered prologue of AD 699,' pp. 272–73. The date for the Passion according to Prosper-Victorius, AP 1, equals AD 28. This indicates that Christ was less than 30 when he died in contravention of Luke's gospel, which states that he was about 30 when he was baptised. Although there were debates about the length of Christ's ministry, all accepted his age at Baptism. This incompatibility between AP and AD served to further undermine Dionysius in the eyes of proponents of the Victorian Easter calculation, such as the author of this prologue.

137 See also Warntjes, 'The final countdown and the reform of the liturgical calendar in the early Middle Ages,' who has recently shown that there is a clear link between chronological systems and Easter reckonings in this period. There is an unusual AM date in Muirchú's *Life of Patrick* which does not accord with any known chronology and may be a transcription error in the manuscript; the preface dated the end of the reigns of Valentinian and Valens to AM 5175; following the Septuagint, this would be circa AM 5574, and the Vulgate, AM 4327. This chronology returns an Incarnation date of AM 4800. See L. Bieler (ed.), *The Patrician Texts in the Book of Armagh* (Dublin 1979) p. 62.

138 Canterbury is identified as the place of composition of this text because the writer was familiar with Eastern sources and Greek texts, and appears to dislike the Irish (see further in this chapter). The combination of characteristics has led the text's most recent editor to argue that Theodore of Tarsus, Archbishop of Canterbury from 668–690, was the author. See Jane Stevenson, *The 'Laterculus Malalianus' and the School of Archbishop Theodore* (Cambridge 1995) esp. pp. 8–20. This attribution has been accepted by several scholars. See J. Siemens, 'Another book for Jarrow's library? Coincidences in exegesis between Bede and the *Laterculus Malalianus*,' *Downside Review* 462 (2013) pp. 15–34, esp. 19, and note 17.

139 This may be a combination of Eusebius's six pre-Christian eras and the belief that each world age should last 1000 years. On the chronology of the *Laterculus*, see Darby, *Bede and the End of Time*, pp. 51–57.

140 *Laterculus Malalianus*, §3, ed. Stevenson, pp. 122–24. Notice that this text follows the long ministry hypothesis for Christ's mission in keeping with the Eastern Church.

141 *Laterculus Malalianus*, §4, ed. and tr. Stevenson, pp. 124–25. See also the preface for another derisory comment about the Irish, p. 120.

142 See McNally on anti-Irish influences in this text: *Scriptores Hiberniae minores I*, pp. 190–91.

143 Aldhelm, *Ep. V, ad Ehfrido*, ed. R. Ehwald, *MGH Auctores antiquissimi*, 15 (Berlin 1919) pp. 486–94 at 493. See Introduction and Chapter One for discussion of the Easter Controversy in the Insular Church.

144 Stevenson, *Laterculus Malalianus*, p. 27.

145 See earlier in this chapter. Warntjes has suggested that the Irish unsuccessfully pro-
moted Victorian chronology in Anglo-Saxon England, 'The final countdown and the
reform of the liturgical calendar in the early Middle Ages'.

146 *Laterculus Malalianus*, §24, pp. 154–56.

147 *Laterculus Malalianus*, §3 and 10, pp. 122 and 132.

148 This is the view of Landes, 'Lest the Millennium be fulfilled'; Darby, *Bede and the
End of Time*, pp. 39–64; and Darby, 'Bede's time shift of 703 in context,' pp. 619–40.

149 F. Wallis, 'Why did Bede write a commentary on Revelation?' in P. Darby and F. Wal-
lis (eds.), *Bede and the Future* (Farnham 2014) pp. 23–45.

150 See Bede, *Expositio Apocalypseos*, ed. R. Gryson, *CCSL* 121A (Turnhout 2001). See
Wallis, 'Why did Bede write a commentary on Revelation?' I am grateful to Miriam
Czoch for discussion of the distinction between apocalypticism and eschatology in
Bede's thought.

151 *DT* 22, line 80, p. 611; tr. Kendall and Wallis, *Bede: On the Nature of Things*, p. 131.

152 *Etymologiae*, book 5.39 (42), ed. W.M. Lindsay (Oxford 1911). See Chapter Four for
discussion of Bede's use of Isidore's chronicles in the 'Chronicle of 703'.

153 See Chapter One.

154 MacCarron, 'Bede, Irish *computistica* and *Annus mundi*'.

155 *DT* 22, lines 6–7: ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 607; tr. Kendall and Wallis, *Bede: On the
Nature of Things*, p. 126.

156 Bede, *De temporum ratione*, 47: ed. Jones, pp. 427–33.

157 The term Vulgate was first applied to Jerome's translation in the sixteenth century.
For an overview on the origins of the Latin Bible, see P.-M. Bogaert, 'The Latin
Bible,' in J.C. Paget and J. Schaper (eds.), *The New Cambridge History of the Bible,
Vol. 1, from the Beginnings to 600* (Cambridge 2013) pp. 505–26, and for the term
Vulgata, pp. 510–11; C. De Hamel, *The Book: A History of the Bible* (London 2001)
pp. 32–34.

158 See Kelly, *Jerome*, pp. 156–59. Jerome also reputedly wished to defend Christianity
against the arguments of Jewish critics: Kelly, *Jerome*, p. 160.

159 Jerome, *Quaestiones Hebraicae in Genesim*, prefatio, *PL* 23.935–1010 at 937: *Sed et
Evangelistae, et Dominus quoque noster atque Salvator, necnon et Paulus Apostolus,
multa quasi de veteri Testamento proferunt, quae in nostris codicibus non habentur*;
tr. C.T.R. Hayward, *St Jerome's* Hebrew Questions on Genesis (Oxford 1995) p. 29.

160 *Incipit prologus Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri in Pentateucho*, in R. Weber and R.
Gryson (eds.), *Biblia sacra iuxta vulgata versionem* (Stuttgart 1969 and 1994) pp.
3–4.

161 John 19:37. Cf. Zechariah 12:10. See *Incipit prologus Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri in
Pentateucho*, p. 3.

162 See P. Darby, 'The Codex Amiatinus *Maiestas Domini* and the Gospel prefaces of
Jerome,' *Speculum* 92.2 (2017) pp. 343–71 at 366–67. Jerome tried to avoid censur-
ing the Septuagint by appearing to subscribe to the belief, probably from rabbinical
tradition, that the 70 translators suppressed information relating to the coming of
Christ as they feared that Ptolemy, the king of Alexandria, might believe they wor-
shipped two gods. See *Quaestiones Hebraicae in Genesim*, prefatio, *PL* 23.936–8;
and *Incipit prologus Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri in Pentateucho*, pp. 3–4. See Hay-
ward, *St Jerome's* Hebrew Questions on Genesis, pp. 94–96.

163 *Incipit prologus Hieronymi in Isaia Propheta*, Weber and Gryson (eds.), *Biblia sacra
iuxta vulgata versionem*, p. 1096.

164 See, e.g., Augustine, *Ep*. 28A = Jerome, *Ep*. 56, ed. J. Labourt, *Saint Jérôme: Let-
tres*, Vol. 3 (Paris 1953) pp. 49–55, though Jerome did not receive it until much later.
See Kelly, *Jerome*, pp. 217–18 and 268–69), and Augustine *Ep*. 71, ed. K.D. Daur,
Sancti Aurelii Augustini: Epistulae LVI – C (Turnhout 2005) pp. 36–39; Rufinus,
Apologia (contra Hieronymum), 2:32–5, ed. M. Simonetti, *CCSL* 20 (Brepols 1961)
pp. 37–123 at 107–10; tr. W.H. Fremantle, *NPNF* 2nd series, III (Grand Rapids, repr.
1989) pp. 435–82 at 475–76.

165 See Kelly, *Jerome*, p. 156. The phrase appears repeatedly in his biblical commentaries and occurs over 80 times in his writings.

166 See *Vita Ceolfridi*, 20 and 37, in Grocock and Wood, *The Abbots of Wearmouth and Jarrow*, pp. 78–121 at 98–99 and 116–19. See now C. Chazelle, *The Codex Amiatinus and Its 'Sister' Bibles: Scripture, Liturgy and Art in the Milieu of the Venerable Bede* (Leiden 2019); unfortunately, this book appeared too late for me to engage with it here.

167 See Bede, *Historia abbatum*, 15, in Grocock and Wood, *The Abbots of Wearmouth and Jarrow*, pp. 22–75 at 56–60. For an introduction to the *Codex Amiatinus* and several full-colour reproductions, see C. De Hamel, *Meetings With Remarkable Manuscripts* (London 2016) pp. 54–95.

168 Cassiodorus, *Institutiones*, book 1:14 (2), ed. Mynors. See J. O'Reilly, 'The library of scripture: Views from Vivarium and Wearmouth-Jarrow,' in P. Binski and W. Noel (eds.), *New Offerings, Ancient Treasures: Studies in Medieval Art for George Henderson* (Stround 2001) pp. 3–39, and Darby, 'The Codex Amiatinus *Maiestas Domini*,' pp. 345–46.

169 See Darby, 'The Codex Amiatinus *Maiestas Domini*,' pp. 369–71. *Codex Amiatinus*, fol. IV/3v: *Hieronyme interpres variis doctissime linguis / te Bethlem celebrat te totus personat orbis / te quoque nostra tuis promet bibliotheca libris / qua nova cum priscis condis donaria gazis*. On Jerome's importance for Bede, see O'Reilly, *St Paul and the Sign of Jonah*, Jarrow Lecture 2014; repr. in O'Reilly, *History, Hagiography and Biblical Exegesis*.

170 Cf. D. Fleming, '*Hebraeam scire linguam*: Bede's Rhetoric of the Hebrew Truth,' in S. Zacher (ed.), *Imagining the Jew: Jewishness in Anglo-Saxon Literature and Culture* (Toronto 2016) pp. 63–78 at 71–77. In her illuminating *DTR* commentary, Faith Wallis suggested that Bede revised world chronology in the interests of historic accuracy, *Bede: The Reckoning of Time*, p. 361.

171 *DT* 22, lines 2–4, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 607; tr. Kendall and Wallis, *Bede: On the Nature of Things*, p. 126. Bede, notably, also dated the nativity using Roman imperial years. The importance of Augustus's reign in Roman and Christian ideas of universal history was discussed earlier.

172 On the Dionysian *argumenta*, see I. Warntjes, 'The *Argumenta* of Dionysius Exiguus and their early recensions,' pp. 40–111. See note 3 for discussion of manuscripts that provide 708 or 709 (DCCVIII and DCCVIIII) years for *DT* 22. See Chapter One for a discussion of the Easter reckoning of Dionysius Exiguus.

173 See Appendix 3, 'Chronological comparison of Bede's chronicles' for a detailed breakdown of the chronology of the 'Chronicle of 703'.

174 Such a mathematical discrepancy only occurs in the sixth age. The number of years in each of the first five ages following the Vulgate equals the total sum of the length of the generations or reigns used in each. The length of the reigns of Samuel and Saul is unclear in scripture, and their relevance for Bede's chronology will be discussed in Chapter Four.

4   Bede's chronicles

Contents and sources

Bede's first chronicle has received very little attention in its own right and is much maligned in modern scholarship because events are dated by generations or reigns rather than precise years, and it is allegedly poorly designed.[1] Such views overlook the chronicle's purpose in a work concerned with the divisions of time, as discussed in Chapter Two, and pay scant attention to the actual contents of the work that reveal that Bede's major computistical interests and chronological pre-occupations were present at the very beginning of his career. The most famous of these is Bede's *Anno Mundi* chronology, which was examined in Chapter Three. His other key features are incorporating a world chronicle in a computus, structuring time on the six ages of the world, using generations to measure time and focussing on the Nativity as the major chronological hinge point. Additionally, Bede's willingness to correct earlier chronographers and his privileging of exegesis over chronology are apparent in the first chronicle. Bede's presentation of events in the first chronicle is laconic, even terse, which can hinder understanding of his purposes. However, if we examine it in relation to Bede's sources and alongside his extended treatment of world history in the second chronicle, we can better appreciate his intentions and identify developments in his thinking over his career.

Bede's second work of computus, *De temporum ratione* is in every respect an extended version of both *De temporibus* and *De natura rerum*, as outlined in Chapter One; the discussion of the divisions of time is greatly expanded, along with the introduction of topics such as finger-counting and the signs of the zodiac, and the addition of five chapters on eschatology after the world chronicle.[2] This difference in scale is especially apparent in the chronicles as the second is ten times the length of the first and structured very differently.[3] Both chronicles begin with a preamble introducing the ages of the world and provide the number of years and generations in each age; however, while the main chronological features of the 'Chronicle of 703' were generations and ages, and the six world ages each received their own chapter (see Chapter Two), the world ages are less explicitly delineated in the second chronicle, which is presented in one inordinately long chapter based on the Vulgate *Anno Mundi*. Generations are preserved in the 'Chronicle of 725' as each entry provides the AM year for the begetting of each generation for the first two world ages, and the relevant rulers from the third world age on, but they are subordinate to Bede's AM chronology. Bede's notice for each

ruler occurs at the AM year marking the end of their reign, following the *Chronica Maiora* of Isidore of Seville (c. AD 560–636); in contrast, the chronicle of Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 263–339), translated and updated by Jerome (c. 347–420), included the length of each emperor's reign when announcing their accession to the throne.[4]

Modern editions and translations of Bede's chronicles indicate that his first chronicle was greatly indebted to Isidore's chronicles, without indicating a preference for one over the other.[5] The main chronological influence on the second chronicle was Eusebius-Jerome, heavily supplemented by Bede's own exegesis of the Old Testament, for the first five ages and the *Liber Pontificalis* for the sixth. Bede also used the chronicles of Prosper, Eutropius and Marcellinus Comes; Jerome-Gennadius's *De viris illustribus*; Eusebius-Rufinus's *Historia ecclesiastica*; various works of Augustine; Orosius's *Histories* and, for events in Britain, Gildas. Bede's dependence on Isidore in 703 is largely due to the fact that his available sources were limited, but little attention has been given to how he engaged with his primary sources.

The following will examine Bede's presentation of the first five ages separately from the sixth age which is considerably the longest in both of Bede's chronicles. The 'Chronicle of 703' is 181 lines in Jones's *CCSL* edition, and the sixth age is 80 lines, or 44% of the total; the 'Chronicle of 725' is 2,066 lines in Jones's *CCSL* edition, and the sixth age is 1,096 lines, or 53% of the total. Bede's willingness to critique and disagree with his sources is apparent in both chronicles, as we will see in examining his chronology for the first five ages alongside Isidore in the first chronicle, and Eusebius-Jerome in the second. The greater range of sources at Bede's disposal in the second half of his career transformed certain elements of his presentation of world history, especially for the sixth age, which will be shown by assessing his imperial chronology, the role of the papacy and the place of Britain.

First to fifth world ages

Bede's chronicles both begin with Creation, as did the chronicles of Prosper of Aquitaine (c. 390 – c. 455) and Isidore, whereas the chronicle of Eusebius-Jerome started with Abraham.[6] The chronicles that open with Creation looked to the Book of Genesis for their chronological information, and Isidore made the connection with Genesis explicit as his chronicles start with an account of the six days of Creation, thereby enforcing the link with the six ages of the world. Commentary on Bede's first chronicle emphasises his dependence on Isidore but little attention is given to his divergences which occur as early as the chronicle's opening lines.[7] In his preamble, Bede explained the ages of the world in relation to the ages of man following Augustine of Hippo (354–430) rather than the six days of Creation, as Isidore had done, before turning to his account of each age in turn.[8] Bede's willingness to depart from his main source is apparent throughout the first chronicle. This should not be regarded as Bede dismissing Isidore but reflects his willingness to pursue his own agenda, a tendency that is apparent throughout his career.

Bede's second chronicle opened with the link between the six ages of the world and Creation week, which he had earlier introduced in *DTR* 10, before moving to a discussion of each world age alongside its analogous age of man, as in the 'Chronicle of 703'. Bede followed this with a very brief summary of the Creation account in Genesis, possibly following Isidore, and offered a brief defence of the Easter computus. He reminded the reader that the Creation of Eve from Adam's side (Genesis 2) has an ecclesiological significance in the blood and water that flowed from Christ's side on the Cross (John 19:34) and prefigured the sacraments. John presented the opening of Christ's side on the Cross as a fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy (John 19:37; Zechariah 12:10) and it is significant that Bede recalled this passage here as Zechariah 12:10 is one of the Old Testament verses that Jerome's Vulgate restored to the canon.[9] Bede may be offering further subtle support for his Vulgate chronology immediately prior to switching to the format of chronicle entries, which begin with Adam begetting Seth at the age, and in the year, of 130.

In the 'Chronicle of 703', Bede followed the model of Isidore's *Chronica Minora* in supplying one key event for each generation or reign, though his choice of event often differed from Isidore indicating Bede's priorities. Bede also began each age by recording its length according to both the Septuagint and Vulgate traditions, information that Isidore did not include. For the first and second world ages, Bede followed Isidore's chronicles closely, despite the differences in length between the Greek and Latin scriptural traditions. Bede was influenced by Isidore in adding extra-biblical material in the second world age, such as the advent of the kingdoms of the Scythians, Egyptians, Assyrians and Sycinians. These are all dated in relation to the Old Testament patriarchs. Indeed, all but Bede's last entry in the second age are borrowings from Isidore's *Chronica Minora*, which makes that entry worthy of attention; after noting that Terah begat Abraham at the age of 70, Bede concluded with 'Semiramis built Babylon' (*Semiramis condidit Babyloniam*).[10] Isidore's *Chronica Maiora* linked Semiramis with her husband, Ninus, king of the Assyrians, and noted that his queen built the walls of Babylon.[11] Bede's focus on Semiramis alone is most unusual as Ninus and Semiramis frequently appeared together in world chronicles: Abraham was born during Ninus's reign, and correlating Abraham and Ninus was a useful means of synchronising sacred and secular chronologies. Eusebius began his chronicle with the reign of Ninus, as did Orosius in his *Histories*. The traditional chronology is that Semiramis ruled for 42 years in her own right, after the 52-year reign of Ninus, and she rebuilt Babylon during this period.[12]

Modern editions of the 'Chronicle of 703' cite Eusebius-Jerome and Orosius as Bede's sources for this entry.[13] However, as Abraham's birth marked the end of the second world age, and this occurred in the 43rd year of Ninus's reign, Semiramis should properly be placed in the third world age, not the second. The succession from Ninus to Semiramis is clear in Eusebius-Jerome and Orosius and, had Bede possessed full copies of either work in 703, such an error would be unlikely, especially as Semiramis's activities – such as establishing Babylon – are clearly dated to her reign and not that of Ninus. It seems impossible that Bede could have

looked to either Eusebius-Jerome or Orosius when writing this entry; indeed, his source was almost certainly Isidore's *Chronica Maiora*, where the birth of Abraham and the doings of Ninus and Semiramis are presented in the same entry. When he wrote the 'Chronicle of 725', he possessed considerably more sources, and the influence of Eusebius-Jerome can be seen in his dating of the reign of Ninus and Semiramis to the third world age.[14]

It is clear that Bede's information was limited in 703 which makes it all the more interesting that he chose to amend his source's information by presenting Semiramis on her own. Although the Assyrian queen was a well known figure in Christian chronography, she was always with Ninus in the earlier sources that I have examined, and many events were related to their joint reigns; for example, the reign of Ninus and Semiramis is included in Eusebius's famous chronological synchronisms with the Baptism of Christ in his chronicle.[15] Ninus was also often cited independently as he ruled when Abraham was born.[16] In contrast, Bede's first chronicle is the only such source which includes Semiramis and entirely omits Ninus. Bede clearly expected his readers to know who she was, despite providing almost no information about her and not locating her through a male connection. The significant element here may be Babylon, which was familiar to Christians primarily as the antithesis of the heavenly city and described in Revelation as 'Babylon the great, the mother of the fornications and the abominations of the earth' (*Babylon magna mater fornicationum et abominationum terrae*: Rev 17:5). Bede's first work of exegesis was a commentary on Revelation, produced around the same time as *De temporibus*.[17] The connection of Semiramis with Babylon may be important as both have negative connotations for Christians: Babylon is opposed to Jerusalem and the whore of Babylon in Revelation is depicted as lustful and bloodthirsty, traits associated with Semiramis.[18] Nevertheless, it is striking that Bede included the queen of the Assyrians alone and expected his readers to identify her.

The entry for Semiramis closed the second age in the 'Chronicle of 703' and we find another woman ruling alone in the third age: Debora, who ruled for 40 years in the list of Judges. In contrast, in the 'Chronicle of 725' Debora is presented with Barak.[19] On this occasion, and unlike in the case of Semiramis, Bede is influenced by Isidore, who presented Debora alone in both the *Chronica Maiora* and *Minora*.[20] In the 'Chronicle of 725', Bede's main source was Eusebius-Jerome, which further suggests that he did not have access to a full version of this chronicle when writing *De temporibus*.[21] Despite following Isidore's notice for Debora, Bede did not unthinkingly follow his chronology, even though the Septuagint and Vulgate reckonings were in agreement for this age.

Bede's chronology differs from Isidore's, firstly, for the duration of the Hebrews' slavery in Egypt, and, secondly for the regnal years of Joshua, Saul and Samuel. Bede recorded that the Hebrews were slaves in Egypt for 147 years, while in Isidore it was 144 years; Isidore agrees with the chronicles of Eusebius-Jerome and Prosper.[22] Bede's figure lacks an identifiable source and calculating his numbers for the third age brings a total of 944 years, two years longer than the duration of 942 years that he ascribed to this age.[23] This may be Bede's own calculation as he

did not repeat it, or indeed provide the length of the Hebrew slavery in Egypt, in his second chronicle. It is notable that in 703 Bede challenged Isidore's authority on this matter; however, when writing in 725, and having consulted more sources which supported Isidore's figure, Bede seems to have been unconvinced by their findings but was also uncertain of his calculation so omitted this detail.

Bede's source analysis can also be seen in his treatment of the more chronologically significant regnal years of Joshua, and Samuel and Saul: in Isidore, Joshua reigned for 27 years, and Samuel and Saul's combined reign was 40 years; according to Bede, Joshua reigned for 26 years and Samuel and Saul for 32 years.[24] Bede repeated his figures in the second chronicle, where he identified Josephus as his source and noted these regnal years are not in scripture.[25] Josephus is important for many early medieval writers and Bede cited him in book 2 of *In Primam Partem Samuhelis*, written before 716;[26] however, little attention has been paid to Bede's use of Josephus in 'correcting' Isidore as early as 703.[27] Bede's total for these three reigns is shorter by nine years than the tradition represented by Isidore. Bede's chronology is internally consistent as it is linked to his note that the Judges held sway from Moses to the time of Samuel, which is presented as 405 years in some manuscripts of the chronicle and equals the total number of years from Moses to Eli in the 'Chronicle of 703'.[28] To underline the coherency of his chronology, Bede included a ten-year reign for Elon within the list of Judges and explained that Elon was not in the Septuagint.[29] Elon is also not in Isidore, who presumably followed Eusebius-Jerome, where Elon appears, though not as one of the Judges, along with the note that he is in the Hebrew tradition but not the Septuagint.[30] In the 'Chronicle of 725' Elon is again in Bede's list of Judges and Bede explained that Eusebius had to extend the reigns of Joshua, Samuel and Saul to comply with scripture which recorded that the period from the Exodus to the construction of the temple would be 480 years.[31] It is clear that Bede was willing to critique his sources and privileged exegesis over chronology from the beginning of his career. In *De temporum ratione*, he told his readers to follow scripture in any dispute with chronographers, but he seems to have come to that conclusion at an early stage in his intellectual development.[32] The significant difference in his treatment of the problem of these regnal years between 703 and 725 is the confident assurance that enabled him to openly identify Josephus as his source and overtly challenge the prevailing tradition in the later work.

Differences in chronology between Bede and Isidore continued in the fourth world age, which is 12 years shorter in the Vulgate reckoning than the Septuagint. Bede noted that Amon's reign was two years, whereas he ruled for 12 years in Isidore's chronicles,[33] and both Athaliah and Josiah's reigns are shorter by one year in the 'Chronicle of 703' than in Isidore. When recording the subjugation of the Assyrians to the Medes, Bede added that the Assyrian kingdom lasted for 1,305 years.[34] The origin of Bede's figure is unknown as Isidore did not offer any such information, and according to Eusebius-Jerome the Assyrian kingdom lasted 1,197 years, or 1,240 years if counting from the first year of Ninus.[35] In the 'Chronicle of 725', Bede revised his calculation to follow Eusebius-Jerome, again indicating that this source was unfamiliar to him in 703.[36]

The priority of scripture in chronological matters is again evident here as Bede dated the building of Solomon's temple to the 480th year from the Exodus (1 Kings 6:1), whereas Isidore placed the beginning of its construction to Solomon's fourth year and its completion to his eighth.[37] Bede used this scriptural date to confirm that the reigns of Samuel and Saul in the third age were 32 years, and his figures throughout the chronicle are internally consistent.[38] He discussed these numbers at length in his commentary on Samuel and we have seen that, in the second chronicle, he argued that Eusebius extended the reigns of Joshua, Samuel and Saul to reach the scriptural figure of 480 years.[39] The fourth age concludes with the capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar and the destruction of the temple. Bede recorded that Nebuchadnezzar captured Judaea in Jehoiakim's third year, but, somewhat surprisingly, he did not give a year for the destruction of the Temple.[40] In the *Chronica Maiora*, Isidore recorded that the temple was burned in the 454th year of its construction, but this is incompatible with his regnal years, which may explain Bede's caution.[41] In contrast, in the 'Chronicle of 725', Bede recorded that the temple was burned 430 years after its foundation and in the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar.[42]

There are further chronological differences between Bede and Isidore in the fifth age. Bede followed Isidore in noting the Hebrew Captivity lasted 70 years, but the reigns of the first two emperors, Darius and Xerses, were longer in Bede than in Isidore: Darius reigned for 36 years and Xerses for 21, according to Bede, but 34 and 20 years respectively in Isidore.[43] Bede's regnal years are identical to Isidore's for the rest of the age and Bede's numbers are internally consistent if one adds up the total regnal years for this age plus the 70 years of Hebrew Captivity, which Bede noted ended in the second year of Darius's reign.[44] Bede's calculations indicate the sixth age began with the birth of Christ in the 42nd year of Octavian (later known as Augustus), though this is not explicitly stated, as the last entry in the fifth age concerns the five-year reign of Julius Caesar, while the sixth age begins with the reign of Octavian. This reflects Isidore's chronicles in which he may have been influenced by Classical historiography and Christian ideas of providence that saw Octavian's reign as the beginning of a new age.[45]

Bede also noted that Ezra restored the Law, Nehemiah rebuilt Jerusalem and the creation of the Septuagint occurred in the fifth world age.[46] He followed Isidore in observing the change in fortunes amongst the kingdoms of the world, as the Persians were supplanted by the Greeks.[47] Bede's chronology for Alexander the Great follows Isidore's and differs from that of Eusebius-Jerome.[48] During the reign of Epiphanes, Bede and Isidore note that the Romans conquered the Greeks.[49] In his entry for Pompey's eight-year reign, Bede noted that he was the son of Cleopatra, a detail from Isidore's *Chronica Maiora*. Cleopatra is another example of a woman in power in the 'Chronicle of 703' whose reign is important for universal chronology; her two-year reign is included, but no reference to Egypt coming under Roman sway or her relationship with Julius Caesar is given.[50] Bede concluded the fifth age by noting that the kingdom of the Greeks was followed by the empire of the Romans, which is not in Isidore, before he announced the five-year reign of Julius Caesar.[51] Bede followed Isidore in noting

that Caesar was followed by emperors who were named Caesar after him.[52] In his *Chronica Maiora*, Isidore added that Caesar obtained Gaul and triumphed over Britain; somewhat surprisingly, Bede did not take this opportunity to refer to Britain.[53]

It is clear that although Isidore's chronicles were Bede's main source, his independence is apparent on several occasions in the 'Chronicle of 703'. Bede's source criticism is most obvious in his engagement with chronology, but there are many other examples which reveal Bede's and Isidore's diverging interests. In general, Isidore prioritised matters of state, such as Roman military campaigns or the births of Romulus and Remus, especially in the *Chronica Minora*, whereas Bede's primary focus appears to be on activities relating to the faith, though Bede did record the foundation of Rome.[54] Consequently Bede omitted events from classical history, such as the beginning of the Olympic Games and the lives of important artists, like Sophocles and Euripides.[55] As we shall see in the sixth world age, Bede followed Isidore most closely when recording church affairs, although – somewhat surprisingly – more heretics and heresies appear in Isidore than in the 'Chronicle of 703': for example, Sabellianism, Priscillianism, the Anthropomorphite heresy and the Arianism of the Goths were in Isidore and omitted by Bede.[56] Isidore's eschatology is also more explicit than Bede's in *De temporibus*.

Sixth world age

The sixth age is by far the longest in both of Bede's chronicles and is of greatest importance because of the Incarnation. Indeed, Bede consistently emphasised the beginning of Christ's life, rather than his Baptism which was the major chronological focal point in the world chronicle tradition.[57] In both chronicles, the sixth world age opens with the birth of Christ during the reign of Octavian and runs to the relevant *annus praesens*, 703 and 725 respectively.[58]

The Nativity is the only event in the first chronicle that is dated by both generations (that is, imperial years in the sixth age) and AM years: in keeping with Bede's recognition of both the Vulgate and Septuagint traditions in the 'Chronicle of 703', he dated it to 3,952 years or, according to others, 5,199 years from Adam.[59] In contrast, Bede dated the Passion to the eighteenth year of Tiberius, following Iohannine tradition, and did not give it an AM date.[60] Isidore acknowledged the significance of both the Nativity and Passion in his chronicles, but Bede reversed Isidore's practise, as Isidore dated Christ's birth by Octavian's reign and the Passion by imperial and AM years: XVIII Tiberius and 5,228 years from Creation.[61] Isidore also linked his announcement of Christ's birth in the *Chronica Maiora* with the decline of the Jewish kingdom.[62] The previous entry highlighted the significance of these events, as Isidore noted that the 69 weeks prophesied by Daniel in the Old Testament were fulfilled during Octavian's reign.[63] The second recension included additional information about Octavian's *Imperium* and added that he brought peace on land and sea to the entire world. This is a common trope in patristic exegesis of Augustus and the *pax Romana*.[64] Bede did not associate the birth of Christ with the Roman subjugation of the kingdom of Israel in either

chronicle. However, in his great announcement of Christ's birth in *De tempo-rum ratione*, he highlighted the providential peace that Octavian had established throughout the world and effectively marked the break between the old and new dispensations.[65]

Bede possessed far more sources for the sixth world age than for the other five ages as is especially apparent in the second chronicle where he frequently sup-plemented his main source, the chronicle of Eusebius-Jerome, with additional material. The wealth of new information in 725 transformed his presentation of world history as can be seen by a close examination of three areas: Bede's impe-rial chronology, the role of the papacy and the island of Britain. Bede also paid more attention to heresy in the second chronicle and the significance of heresy, especially the Christological controversies, for Bede's theology of time will be examined in Chapter Five.

Bede's imperial chronology

There are 62 imperial reigns in Bede's first chronicle and 66 in the second. That Bede named five emperors between 703 and 725 immediately indicates a dif-ference in his imperial chronology. Bede included the emperor, Galerius, who he called Valerius, between Diocletian and Constantine in the first chronicle, but omitted him from the second. Bede followed Isidore who included this emperor but observed that nothing worth recounting happened during his reign. There was no additional information for his two-year reign in Bede.[66]

The difference in Bede's imperial chronology is confirmed when considering regnal lengths. The imperial reigns in the first chronicle are all whole numbers for the period covered by Isidore's chronicle, which was Isidore's practise. Indeed, the only exception in the first chronicle is the six-month tenure of the seventh-century Constantine, son of Heraclius who was the last emperor in Isidore. In con-trast, Eusebius-Jerome recorded several reigns in years and months. Apart from the seventh-century Constantine, the other 22 reigns counted in years and months in the 'Chronicle of 725' are from the period covered by Eusebius-Jerome.[67] There are minor differences between Bede and his primary sources in both chronicles. In the 'Chronicle of 703', he twice disagreed with Isidore: Aurelius Antoninus (Marcus Aurelius) reigned for four years in Bede, three in Isidore; and Theo-dosius II, 26 years in Bede and 27 in Isidore, though there are inconsistencies between Isidore's chronicles for the reigns of some emperors. Bede differed from Eusebius-Jerome for five reigns: Claudius is a month shorter in Bede, 13 years and seven months rather than 13 years and eight months; Domitian is a year longer in Bede, 16 years and five months rather than 15 years and five months; Severus reigned for 17 years according to Bede, rather than 18; Constantius, Constantine and Constans were a month longer in Bede, 24 years, six months and 13 days, not five months; and Julian was one year longer in Bede, ruling for two years and eight months, not one year and eight months.

These differences are insignificant and could be simple transcription errors in Roman numerals. It is also possible that Bede had separate lists of Roman emperors

containing their regnal years: he gave the lengths of the reigns of Caligula, Nerva, and Trajan in years, months and days, rather than just the years and months of Eusebius-Jerome in the 'Chronicle of 725'. Bede also had an imperial chronology that covered the seventh century in 703 and another that extended into the first quarter of the eighth century in 725. He included very little supplementary material for the seven additional emperors up to 703, suggesting he may have only had a list of their reigns. Bede's Byzantine regnal years differ from modern calculations leading Daniel Mc Carthy to suggest that his source was unreliable.[68] The greatest difference in imperial chronology between Bede and his main source in the 'Chronicle of 725' was for the reign of Valentinian and Valens; Bede counted this as 11 years, while Jerome's continuation dated their combined reign to 14 years and five months. In the 'Chronicle of 703', Bede did not present Valentinian and Valens as joint rulers, though followed Isidore in dating Valentinian's reign to 14 years.[69] He also differed from Isidore in adding that Valentinian had been deprived of his military command during Julian's reign because he was a Christian.[70] In the 'Chronicle of 725', Valentinian and Valens had an 11-year reign followed by the four-year rule of Valens, Gratian and Valentinian II. Bede's source is unidentified, though the total reigns of Valentinian and Valens is close to Jerome's figure. Bede may have been influenced by Orosius, who presented Valens's reign after the death of Valentinian, though he did not include their total regnal years.[71]

The refinements that Eusebius-Jerome introduced to Bede's imperial years have significant consequences for his AM chronology of the sixth age. In adding the regnal years for the sixth age in both chronicles, the first chronicle is nine years longer than the second for the period from the Nativity to 703; however, more interestingly, both chronicles are longer than the span of time allotted to them – the 'Chronicle of 703' is 12 years too long as adding the imperial years equals 715, not 703, and the 'Chronicle of 725' is three years too long, as the total of imperial years is 728.[72] Much of the discrepancy between the two chronicles is accounted for by Emperor Heraclius, who ruled for 36 years in the first chronicle, and 26 years in the second; in modern historiography his reign was 31 years. Bede is also helped by dropping the two-year reign of Galerius from the second chronicle. Eusebius-Jerome's more precise regnal durations accounts for other minor variations between the chronicles, as can be seen in the computed AM dates for the first chronicle in comparison to Bede's actual AM dates from the second chronicle in Appendix 3.[73] This discrepancy between the chronicles indicates that Bede preferred the greater chronological accuracy of a source such as Eusebius-Jerome to the testimony of Isidore when writing in 725. In both chronicles he supplemented his primary sources with other materials, as we have seen. One of the most important of these in 725 was the *Liber Pontificalis*, which transformed Bede's understanding of the papacy.

Bede and the papacy

The most obvious impact of the *Liber Pontificalis* on Bede's universal history is that he named only three popes in the 'Chronicle of 703' – Peter, Fabian and

Gregory the Great – whereas there are 41 popes in the 'Chronicle of 725'.[74] Bede's information for the majority of these is clearly taken from the *Liber Pontificalis*, which he appears to have acquired in the intervening years. There are two places in the 'Chronicle of 703' where the *Liber Pontificalis* may be Bede's source but neither is certain. For the reign of Diocletian with Maximian, Bede wrote: *His persecutoribus intra XXX dies XVII milia passi sunt* ('Under these persecutors, 17,000 people died within thirty days').[75] This is recorded in the *Liber Pontificalis* for the papacy of Marcellinus, but the language is very different to Bede's: '*quo tempore fuit persecutio magna, infra XXX diebus XVI milia hominum promiscui sexus per diversas provintias martyrio coronarentur*' ('when there was so great a persecution that within thirty days 17,000 persons of both sexes were crowned with martyrdom as Christians in various provinces').[76] Bede may have received this information through an intermediary source. The second is during the reign of Constantine IV, who Bede notes summoned the Sixth Ecumenical Council: *Hic sextam synodum composuit*.[77] The *Liber Pontificalis* is usually cited as Bede's source, but his entry is again phrased very differently. During the reign of Agatho, the *Liber Pontificalis* indicates that the emperors Constantine IV, Heraclius and Tiberius together summoned this council, rather than crediting it to Constantine alone as Bede did. The substantial account of this council is then included during the papacy of Leo II.[78] In contrast, Bede's brief statement suggests he learned about the council from another source.

These differences between the *LP* and Bede and the very limited papal presence in the first chronicle indicate that he did not have a copy of this text in 703. His version of this work in 725 extended to the reign of the current pope, Gregory II (r. 715–731).[79] It seems likely that this was the only version of *LP* known to Bede, as it can only be attested with certainty in his later works: *De temporum ratione*, *In Marcum*, the *Martyrologium* and the *Historia ecclesiastica*, all believed to have been completed after 725.[80] Many Anglo-Saxon pilgrims travelled to Rome and returned to Britain during Bede's lifetime, including three of the early abbots of Wearmouth-Jarrow (Benedict Biscop, Ceolfrith and Hwætberht) and two bishops from Northumbria (Wilfrid and Acca).[81] Indeed, Ceolfrith died en route during his second pilgrimage to Rome in 716, but members of his party completed their journey and presented the *Codex Amiatinus* to Pope Gregory II, who sent a letter of acknowledgment to Ceolfrith's successor as abbot, Hwætberht.[82] It is possible that those returning with Gregory II's letter also brought the *Liber Pontificalis* to Wearmouth-Jarrow.[83]

The popes in the 'Chronicle of 725' are not presented in strictly chronological order and there are many omissions; from Peter to Gregory II inclusive, *LP* contains the biographies of 91 popes, 50 of which are not in the chronicle.[84] Paul Hilliard has noted that Bede looked to *LP* almost continuously from AM 4362 (the dual reign of Arcadius and Honorius, the sons of Theodosius), and of the 58 remaining entries in the chronicle, 39 explicitly mention the bishop of Rome.[85] Indeed, 27 of the 41 popes named in the chronicle are from this point onwards, and Bede also used this text for information that did not directly relate to or even acknowledge the reigning pope, for example, in recording a Saracen raid on

Siciliy.[86] This period follows the conclusion of Jerome's continuation of Eusebius, and *LP* was clearly a most helpful and useful supplement to Isidore for subsequent events. The popes are, however, best represented for the seventh and early eighth centuries, by which point all of Bede's major chronological and historical sources had terminated; of the 65 popes from Peter to Pelagius II (d. 590) inclusive, Bede included 25; of the 26 popes from Gregory I to Gregory II inclusive, he included 16. To put it another way, 38.5% of the popes before Gregory the Great feature in the chronicle, compared to 61.5% of the seventh- and early eighth-century popes. Furthermore, two of the pre-seventh-century popes are included out of sequence as Julius and Vigilius feature *s.a.* 4639 during the seventh-century reign of Agatho in Bede's summary of the six ecumenical councils; he recorded that the Synod of Nicaea was convened while Julius was pope and the fifth ecumenical council was held at Constantinople during the time of Vigilius.[87]

In addition, Bede's information for four popes is not taken from the *Liber Pontificalis*. Leo, Honorius, Severinus and John IV are each mentioned in relation to the Easter Controversy, and Bede's information is from computistical sources. Leo the Great is mentioned once, and out of sequence, in the entry for the capture of Carthage in AD 430 during the papacy of Celestine. Bede noted that Bishop Paschasinus of Lilybaeum referred to the city's capture in a letter to Leo about the calculation of Easter.[88] Honorius, Severinus and John IV appear in Bede's discussion of the conversion of Northumbria during the reign of Heraclius; following his account of Paulinus, Bede referred to the papal letters of Honorius and John (Severinus's successor and written when he was pope-elect) to the Irish about their Easter observance.[89] The surviving evidence indicates such letters were circulating in computus collections in Britain and Ireland. They could have come to Bede directly from the papal archives in Rome, but a complete version of John's letter does not survive and there is an independent reference to it in the *Munich Computus* suggesting various dissemination routes.[90] Bede also used other sources, such as the writings of Gregory the Great and the Acts of the Lateran Council of 649, along with his information about imperial reigns in the seventh and early eighth centuries.[91]

Unknown and unidentified material aside, Bede's main source for the latter stages of the sixth age is the *Liber Pontificalis*. However, although he used the *LP* as a mine of information, he was not interested in or influenced by its papal chronology. Recent scholarship on the *LP* has argued that the collection of papal biographies is, among other things, attempting to re-orientate time around the rule of popes rather than emperors. Rosamond McKitterick has shown that presenting popes successively, emphasising papal primacy from Peter, and calculating the length of each pope's reign and how long the See was vacant between holders, enabled the Church to Christianise the history of Rome and develop a new Christian chronology.[92] Paul Hilliard has argued that, in Bede's second chronicle, 'the general trajectory is a gradual replacement of imperial activity with papal activity and insular observations'.[93] Bede clearly focussed much attention on papal activities in the second chronicle, especially when compared to the first, but this did not affect his presentation of chronology; rather, as we have seen, he refined

his imperial years in the second chronicle. The *Liber Pontificalis* allowed Bede to include much papal and Church activity in his account of the sixth age, especially as papal encounters with emperors increasingly centred on questions of faith and doctrine, a subject that was of great interest to him,[94] but his presentation of time and chronology was not re-orientated by this source.

Bede and Britain

Like the papacy, Britain is also a far more substantial presence in the 'Chronicle of 725' than the 'Chronicle of 703'. Bede only referred to Britain once in the first chronicle, noting that, during the reign of Phocas, 'The Saxons in Britain received the faith of Christ' (*Saxones in Brittania fidem Christi suscipiunt*).[95] In the second chronicle, and in the *Historia ecclesiastica*, he accurately dated the Roman mission to the reign of Maurice, which further reveals the limits of his knowledge in 703.[96] Some manuscripts of the 'Chronicle of 703' also recorded the arrival of the English during the reign of Marcian (*Anglorum gens in Brittaniam uenit*).[97] The difference in terminology from *Saxones* to *gens Anglorum* suggests that this entry for the Anglo-Saxon *adventus* was added by a later copyist, most probably someone familiar with Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica gentis anglorum*. A further indication that this was not an original entry is that Bede tended to ascribe one event to each generation/reign in the chronicle, and the Council of Chalcedon was recorded for this imperial reign.

In contrast, we learn much about activities in Britain in the second chronicle.[98] For the most part, Bede followed the traditional narrative of Roman influence on Britain, pieced together from different sources, including Eusebius-Jerome, Orosius and Eutropius. This continued until the province's destruction in the fifth century due to the Roman withdrawal and depredations of the Irish, Pictish and Anglo-Saxon invaders, for which Bede's main source was Gildas. Britain's first appearance is the conquest of Julius Caesar, *s.a.* 3903, followed by the invasion of Claudius, *s.a.* 4007, and Nero almost losing the island, *s.a.* 4021. Bede also recorded the note in the *Liber Pontificalis* that Lucius, the king of Britain asked the bishop of Rome, Eleutherius, to make him a Christian. Bede dated this to the reign of Marcus Aurelius and *s.a.* 4132.[99] Bede's next entry for Britain concerned the Roman occupation and the efforts of Severus Pertinax to protect the British provinces by building a wall, *s.a.* 4163. Britain is then mentioned because of its recapture by Asclepiodotus during the reign of Diocletian, *s.a.* 4258, followed by the proclamation of Constantine as emperor in Britain, *s.a.* 4290, and Maximus the usurper was proclaimed emperor in Britain during the reign of Gratian, *s.a.* 4338. This signalled a change in Britain's fortunes as, following Gildas, Bede noted that Maximus despoiled Britain of its army and left the island open to attack by the Irish and Picts, *s.a.* 4349. Bede's next entry, *s.a.* 4377, recounted the Roman army's last efforts to quell the attacks of the Irish and Picts during the reign of Honorius and followed this with the dire situation in Britain and their fateful decision to ask the Angles for help during the reign of Theodosius [II], *s.a.* 4403. Britain is dominant in the next pages of the chronicle due to the arrival of 'the Angles or of the Saxons'

(*Gens Anglorum siue Saxonum Britaniam tribus longis nauibus aduehitur*),[100] along with the impact of Pelagianism and the mission of Germanus of Auxerre, *s.a.* 4410. This was followed by the Britons' military successes against the Anglo-Saxons under the leadership of Ambrosius Aurelianus, the last of the Romans, before the Anglo-Saxons dominated the whole island, *s.a.* 4444.

After this, the entries concerning Britain focus on the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons and development of the Anglo-Saxon Church. Bede accurately placed the Roman mission of Augustine and his party in the reign of Maurice, *s.a.* 4557, rather than Phocas, and noted that Æthelberht and the people of Kent converted to Christianity at this time. The *Liber Pontificalis* is important for framing the mission but Bede also appears to have gathered material from sources in Britain, such as information from written records or old traditions at Canterbury, that he referred to in the preface to the *HE*.[101] Bede is also aware of Northumbrian history, as he recorded that the peoples north of the River Humber, ruled by Kings Ælle and Æthelfrith, did not receive teachers at this time. He recorded the conversion of the Northumbrians shortly afterwards and presented Edwin's conversion in an entry that is unusually well signposted by chronological systems:

> *Anno Heracli regni XVI, indictione XV, Eduinus excellentissimus rex Anglo-rum in Brittania transumbranae gentis ad aquilonem predicante Paulino episcopo, quem miserat de Cantia uenerabilis archiepiscopus Iustus. Verbum salutis cum sua gente suscepit anno regni sui XI, aduentus autem Anglorum in Brittaniam plus minus anno CLXXX; eique Paulino sedem episcopatus Eburaci donauit.*
>
> In the sixteenth year of Heraclius' reign and the fifteenth indiction, and more or less one hundred and eighty years after the arrival of the English in Britain, Edwin, the most excellent king of the English living across the Humber in north Britain, received with his people the Word of salvation through the preaching of Bishop Paulinus, whom the venerable Archbishop Justus had sent from Kent. This was in the eleventh year of [Edwin's] reign. He gave Paulinus the episcopal see at York.[102]

In addition to the AM year, Bede included four other chronologies – regnal years for Heraclius and Edwin, the indiction and a year count from the Anglo-Saxon *adventus*. Very few events are singled out in this fashion in the 'Chronicle of 725'; indeed, Bede's announcement for the Incarnation is the only other time such a range of chronologies was used, indicating the importance of Edwin's conversion for Bede.[103] This is especially notable when compared to the minimalist treatment of the conversion of Æthelberht of Kent, the first Anglo-Saxon Christian king, who we are told converted soon after the Roman missionaries arrived.[104] The anonymous *Life* of Gregory the Great from the monastery of Whitby independently attests to the importance of memories of Edwin's conversion in Northumbria during this period.[105] Bede used similar chronological signposting for important events in Anglo-Saxon history in the *HE*, such as the beginning of the Roman mission to the Anglo-Saxons.[106]

After celebrating the conversion of Northumbria and Edwin's reign, Bede noted that papal letters were sent to the Irish about the correct calculation of Easter. The next reference to Britain also enforced the link between the island and Rome in relating that Pope Vitalian sent Archbishop Theodore and Abbot Hadrian to the island, *s.a.* 4622. After this, there is a brief account of Etheldreda and her post-mortem bodily incorruption, *s.a.* 4639, in the same entry as Bede's account of the first six ecumenical councils dated by emperors and popes; the following entry, *s.a.* 4649, commemorated the work of Willibrord, who was ordained by Pope Sergius, amongst the Frisians;[107] and the entry after celebrated the life and post-mortem bodily incorruption of Cuthbert of Lindisfarne, *s.a.* 4652.[108] This occurred during the reign of Leo, one of the late reigns that did not have any accompanying event in the 'Chronicle of 703'.[109] Bede's verse *Life* of Cuthbert is from early in his career and he could, perhaps, have included Cuthbert in the first chronicle had he been interested in recording Insular history then. In the 'Chronicle of 725', Bede noted that he had written prose and verse accounts of Cuthbert, his verse from some years ago.[110]

The third- and second-to-last entries in the chronicle also refer to Anglo-Saxon activities – *s.a.* 4670, and the notable *anno ab incarnatione domini* date of 716, Bede recorded that Egbert succeeded in converting many provinces of the Irish to the correct method for calculating Easter.[111] Bede did not specifically mention Iona, and one wonders how much information he possessed about that monastery in 725, as missionaries from Iona and their royal supporters, Kings Oswald and Oswiu, are entirely absent from the chronicle. This was only the second time that Bede used AD years in the chronicle; the first, appropriately, marked the beginning of Dionysius Exiguus's Easter tables in AD 532, as *De temporum ratione* advocates the Dionysian Easter.[112] The Dionysian table was also highlighted in the 'Chronicle of 703', and it is one of the very few entries that received a precise date – the sixth year of Justinian's reign. This was Bede's own insertion as Isidore did not refer to Dionysius's Easter Table in his chronicles.[113] The eclipse of May 664 is also precisely dated in the first chronicle to the seventh indiction and the third of May, although it fell on the first of May.[114] Bede's information came from the Dionysian Easter table, further underscoring the purpose of his *computistica* as *De temporibus* was similarly written to promote this reckoning. The last entry relating to Britain in the 'Chronicle of 725', *s.a.* 4671, recorded the desire of many Anglo-Saxon Christians to go on pilgrimages to Rome, including Bede's abbot, Ceolfrith, who died en route.

Although Britain is far more prominent in the 'Chronicle of 725' compared to the 'Chronicle of 703', Bede's presentation nevertheless builds on the same premise, that is, the importance of the Anglo-Saxons' conversion to Christianity; as we have seen, this was the only Insular event recorded in the first chronicle. Bede's larger selection of sources allowed him to present a greater backdrop to their conversion in the second chronicle and focus on the specific actions of individuals, but the message remained the same. Through their conversion to Christianity, the Anglo-Saxons have taken their place in the unfolding of providential history as recorded in Bede's world chronicles.

Conclusion

In every respect, Bede's second chronicle is a grander presentation of time, chronology and history than his first offering in *De temporibus*. However, an examination of both chronicles reveals similarities in approach and that Bede's major interests, ideas, independence of thought and chronological innovations were present at the very beginning of his career. The key chronological features of the 'Chronicle of 703' are all repeated in 725. These are: (1) incorporating a world chronicle in a computus; (2) structuring time on the six ages of the world; (3) using generations to measure time; (4) adopting Vulgate, rather than Septuagint, chronology; and (5) emphasising the Nativity as the major chronological hinge point. Bede's capacity for careful source analysis and privileging of exegesis over chronography were also revealed in 703, for example, in his critique of Isidore's chronology for the reigns of Samuel and Saul, which he further developed when examining Eusebius-Jerome in 725. The major changes between Bede's treatments of world history between 703 and 725 reflect the greater range of sources at his disposal in the second half of his career, along with his continuing intellectual development following extensive exegesis of the scriptural text over many years, as we shall see in the next chapter. Most significantly, he appears to have known neither Eusebius-Jerome's *Chronicle* nor the *Liber Pontificalis* in 703, and both were of immense importance to his 'Chronicle of 725'. This chronicle, produced in his maturity, is more assertive, and his enhanced knowledge and experience enabled a more comprehensive engagement with chronology, the role of the papacy and the history of his own people; however, the concepts underlying his presentation were all there in the much-derided 'Chronicle of 703'.

Notes

1 See Levison, 'Bede as Historian,' pp. 111–151 at 116; Harrison, *The Framework of Anglo-Saxon History*, p. 76; Shaw, *The Gregorian Mission to Kent in Bede's Ecclesiastical History*, p. 23 and note 13; and Chapter Two.

2 *De temporum ratione* [*DTR*], ed. C.W. Jones, *CCSL* 123 B (Turnhout 1977) including cc. 66–71 (the chronicle and chapters on eschatology) from T. Mommsen (ed.), *MGH Auctores antiquissimi*, 13, *Chronica Minora* 3 (Berlin 1898) pp. 247–317; *De temporibus* [*DT*], ed. C.W. Jones, *CCSL* 123C (Turnhout 1980) pp. 585–611, including cc. 17–22 (the chronicle) from T. Mommsen (ed.), *MGH Auctores antiquissimi*, 13, *Chronica Minora* 3 (Berlin 1898) pp. 247–317. On Bede's eschatology, see Darby, *Bede and the End of Time*.

3 Charles Jones observed that in the *Patrologia Latina* editions of Bede's works the first chronicle is just under five columns, while the second extends to 50 full columns: Jones, *Saints' Lives and Chronicles in Early England*, p. 17.

4 Isidore of Seville, *Chronica maiora*, ed. J.C. Martín, *CCSL* 112 (Turnhout 2003); Eusebius-Jerome, *Chronicon*, ed. Helm, *Griechische Christliche Schriftsteller*.

5 *Chronica maiora*, ed. Martín; *Chronica minora* (*Chronicon* B), in *Etymologiae*, 5:38–9, ed. W.M. Lindsay (Oxford 1911).

6 Prosper of Aquitaine, *Epitoma Chronicon*, ed. T. Mommsen, *MGH Auctores antiquissimi*, 9, *Chronica Minora*, 1 (Munich 1981) pp. 385–485. Isidore, *Chronica maiora*, ed. Martín; *Chronica Minora*, ed. Lindsay. Eusebius-Jerome, *Chronicon*, ed. Helm. See Chapter Three for discussion of these chronicles.

7 See C. Kendall and F. Wallis, 'Commentary,' in *Bede: On the Nature of Things*, pp. 178–79; and footnotes for *DT* 17–22, ed. Mommsen in Jones, pp. 601–11; Kendall and Wallis, *Bede: On the Nature of Things*, pp. 118–31.

8 *DT* 16–22, ed. Mommsen in Jones, pp. 600–11. See Chapter Two for the chronicle's structure.

9 See Chapter Three, pp. 81–2.

10 *DT* 18, line 13, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 603; Kendall and Wallis, *Bede: On the Nature of Things*, p. 120.

11 Isidore, *Chronica Maiora*, 33, ed. Martín, pp. 31–32.

12 Eusebius-Jerome, *Chronicon*, ed. Helm, p. 20; Orosius, *Historiarum adversum paganos libri VII*, 1.4; 2.2.1 and 5; and 2.3.1, ed. C. Zangemeister (Leipzig 1889) pp. 42–44, 83–84 and 85. Ninus and Semiramis do not appear in Prosper's chronicle at the time of Abraham but are included when he followed Eusebius-Jerome in synchronising various events with the Baptism of Christ in XV Tiberius: *Epitoma Chronicon*, 383, ed. Mommsen, p. 409. See Chapter Three for discussion.

13 See Jones, *De temporibus* 19, in *CCSL* 123C, notes on line 13, p. 603; Kendall and Wallis, *Bede: On the Nature of Things*, p. 120.

14 Bede, *DTR* 66, *s.a.* 2023, lines 235–41, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 470.

15 Eusebius-Jerome, *Chronicon*, ed. Helm, p. 174. See Chapter Three for discussion.

16 See, e.g., Cassiodorus, *Chronica*, ed. T. Mommsen, *MGH Auctores antiquissimi*, 11, *Chronica Minora*, 2 (Berlin 1894) pp. 120–61. Cassiodorus also counts time from the Flood to the beginning of Ninus' reign rather than the birth of Abraham. See Chapter Three.

17 See F. Wallis, Intro to *Bede: Commentary on Revelation* (Liverpool 2013) pp. 39–57, and *eadem*., 'Why did Bede write a commentary on Revelation?' pp. 23–45.

18 See Revelation 17–19, and Bede, *Expositio Apocalypseos*, bk 3.29, ed. R. Gryson, *CCSL* 121A (Turnhout 2001) for Bablyon; see, e.g., Orosius, *Historiarum*, 4.4–7 for Semiramis, ed. Zangemeister, pp. 43–44.

19 *DT* 19, lines 12–13, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 603. *DTR* 66, *s.a.* 2679, lines 322–23, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 473. See Judges 4–5, esp. 4:9.

20 Isidore, *Chronica Maiora*, 73, ed. Martín, pp. 46–47; *Etymologiae*, 5.39 (10), ed. Lindsay.

21 Eusebius-Jerome, *Chronicon*, ed. Helm, p. 53.

22 Bede, *DT* 19, lines 7–8, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 603. Isidore, *Etymologiae*, 5.39 (9), ed. Lindsay; *Chronica Maiora*, 44, ed. Martín, pp. 34–35. Eusebius-Jerome, *Chronicon*, ed. Helm, p. 36; Prosper, *Epitoma Chronicon* 45, ed. Mommsen, p. 387. Cf. also Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* 16.43, lines 1–3, ed. B. Dombert and A. Kolb, *De Civitate Dei, Libri XI – XXII*, CCSL 48 (Turnhout 1985) p. 548.

23 See Appendix 3, 'Chronological comparison of Bede's chronicles' for a full breakdown of the chronology of both chronicles. D.P. Mc Carthy has noted that two manuscripts of *De temporibus* offer 145 years, which produces Bede's total years for the third age: *The Irish Annals*, p. 123, note 14.

24 Joshua: Isidore, *Etymologiae*, 5.39 (10), ed. Lindsay; *Chronica Maiora*, 59, ed. Martín, pp. 40–41; Bede, *DT* 19, line 9, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 603. Samuel and Saul: Isidore, *Etymologiae*, 5.39 (12), ed. Lindsay; *Chronica Maiora*, 104, ed. Martín, pp. 58–59; Bede, *DT* 19, line 22, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 604.

25 *DTR* 66, *s.a.* 2519, lines 296–312 for Joshua; *s.a.* 2870, lines 384–85, Samuel; *s.a.* 2890, lines 388–90, Saul: ed. Mommsen in Jones, pp. 472 and 475. See Josephus, *Antiquities* 5.1.29 and 6.13.5, ed. and tr. H. Thackeray and R. Marcus, *Loeb Classical Library, Josephus V* (Cambridge, MA 1977) pp. 54–55 and 312–13.

26 *In Primam Partem Samuhelis libri IIII*, book 2, lines 45–54, ed. D. Hurst, *CCSL* 119 (II.2) (Turnhout 1962) p. 69. Bede discussed Josephus' regnal years at greater length in this work; see book 2, lines 25–54, pp. 68–69. On the importance of Josephus in the early middle ages, see R.M. Pollard, 'Flavius Josephus: The most influential

classical historian of the early Middle Ages,' in E. Screen and C. West (eds.), *Writing the Early Medieval West* (Cambridge 2018) pp. 15–32. Mc Carthy has argued that Bede took his figures for these reigns from the unknown 'Vulgate source,' *The Irish Annals*, pp. 123–24; however, as Bede's figures are identical to Josephus, it seems most likely that he used Josephus to fill in gaps in the scriptural record.

27 Jones cited Josephus in his notes to *DT* 19, line 22, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 604. I have not seen the early influence of Josephus on Bede discussed elsewhere.

28 *DT* 19, lines 10–11, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 603. See further in this chapter and Appendix 3, 'Chronological comparison of Bede's chronicles'.

29 Bede, *DT* 19, lines 18–19, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 604. See Kendall and Wallis, *Bede: On the Nature of Things*, p. 121, note 131. Cf. also Bede's list of the Judges with identical regnal years in his *In Primam Partem Samuhelis libri IIII*, book 2, lines 29–35, ed. Hurst, p. 68.

30 Eusebius-Jerome, *Chronicon*, ed. Helm, p. 60.

31 I Kings 6:1; *DTR* 66, *s.a.* 2790, lines 351–57, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 474.

32 *DTR* 47, lines 113–23, ed. Jones, p. 433.

33 Bede, *DT* 20, line 20, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 605. Isidore, *Etymologiae*, 5.39 (17), ed. Lindsay; *Chronica Maiora*, 155, ed. Martín, pp. 76–77. Cf. Eusebius-Jerome, *Chronicon*, ed. Helm, p. 95, which includes the caveat that Amon ruled for 12 years according to the LXX elders, two according to the Hebrews. Bede included this information from Eusebius-Jerome in *DTR* 66, *s.a.* 3310, lines 528–29, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 480.

34 Bede, *DT* 20, lines 15–16, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 605. Cf. Isidore, *Chronica Maiora*, 137, ed. Martín, pp. 68–69.

35 Eusebius-Jerome, *Chronicon*, ed. Helm, p. 83.

36 *DTR* 66, *s.a.* 3192, lines 485–87, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 478.

37 Isidore, *Chronica Maiora*, 112, ed. Martín, pp. 60–61. His *Chronica Minora* merely records that it was built during Solomon's reign: *Etymologiae*, 5.39 (13), ed. Lindsay.

38 Bede, *DT* 20, lines 5–6, ed. Mommsen in Jones, pp. 604–5. See Kendall and Wallis, *Bede: On the Nature of Things*, p. 122, note 145.

39 *In Primam Partem Samuhelis*, book 2, lines 25–54, ed. Hurst, pp. 68–69. *DTR* 66, *s.a.* 2790, lines 351–57, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 474. The construction of the temple was a major event in Judaeo-Christian chronography and one of Eusebius-Jerome's chronological markers. See Chapter Three and Appendix 2, 'Table of key chronological events in Eusebius and Jerome'.

40 Bede, *DT* 20, lines 23–24, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 606: *Sedecias ann. XI. Templum Hierosolymis incensum est*. Cf. Isidore, *Etymologiae*, 5.39 (18), ed. Lindsay.

41 Isidore, *Chronica Maiora*, 164, ed. Martín, pp. 80–81.

42 Bede, *DTR* 66, *s.a.* 3363, lines 566–69, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 481, and cf. *s.a.* 3341, lines 551–52, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 481.

43 Bede, *DT* 21, lines 4–5, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 606. Isidore, *Etymologiae*, 5.39 (19), ed. Lindsay; *Chronica Maiora*, 170 and 173, ed. Martín, pp. 84–85.

44 Bede, *DT* 21, line 4 (ending of Hebrew Captivity), ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 606. See Appendix 3, 'Chronological comparison of Bede's chronicles'.

45 See Chapter Three, pp. 68–9.

46 Bede, *DT* 21, lines 6–7, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 606. Isidore, *Etymologiae*, 5.39 (20), ed. Lindsay; *Chronica Maiora*, 177 and 178, ed. Martín, pp. 86–89.

47 Bede, *DT* 21, line 11, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 606. Isidore, *Chronica Maiora*, 194, ed. Martín, pp. 94–95. Paul Hilliard notes that Bede was concerned with the regnal years of whichever kingdom had dominion over Israel and Judah: 'Bede and the changing image of Rome and the Romans,' in E. Screen and C. West (eds.), *Writing the Early Medieval West* (Cambridge 2018) pp. 33–48 at 38.

48 Bede, *DT* 21, lines 12–13, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 606. Isidore, *Chronica Maiora*, 195, ed. Martín, pp. 94–97.

49 Bede, *DT* 21, line 18, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 607. Isidore, *Etymologiae*, 5.39, ed. Lindsay. Cf. Isidore, *Chronica Maiora*, 210 (a), ed. Martín, p. 103.

50 Bede, *DT* 21, line 24, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 607. See Isidore, *Etymologiae*, 5.39 (25), ed. Lindsay. Isidore, *Chronica Maiora*, 232 (a), ed. Martín, p. 111.

51 Bede, *DT* 21, lines 24–25, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 607.

52 Bede, *DT* 21, lines 25–26, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 607; Isidore, *Chronica Maiora*, 234 and 234 (a), ed. Martín, pp. 112 and 113.

53 Isidore, *Chronica Maiora*, 233 (a) and 233 (b), ed. Martín, p. 111. Cf. Bede, *HE* 1.2, ed. Colgrave and Mynors, where the first recorded historical event was Caesar's invasion of Britain. See Chapter Six.

54 Isidore, *Etymologiae*, 5.39 (16), ed. Lindsay, birth of Romulus, not Remus; *Chronica Maiora*, 140 (Olympic Games only in first recension) and 143, ed. Martín, pp. 70–71. Bede, *DT* 20, line 19, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 605.

55 Olympic Games: Isidore, *Etymologiae*, 5.39 (16), ed. Lindsay, and *Chronica Maiora*, 140, ed. Martín, p. 70; Sophocles and Euripides: *Chronica Maiora*, 172, ed. Martín, p. 90, and cf. *Etymologiae*, 5.39, ed. Lindsay.

56 See further in Chapter Five for Bede's understanding of the Christological controversies.

57 See Chapter Three and Chapter Five for the importance of the beginning of Christ's life in Bede's theology of time.

58 Bede, *DT* 22, line 2, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 607; *DTR* 66, *s.a.* 3952, lines 971–78, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 495. Some manuscripts of *DT* give the duration as 709 years. For discussion of this, see Kendall and Wallis, *Bede: On the Nature of Things*, p. 126, note 217; and Ohashi, '*Sexta aetas continet annos praeteritos DCCVIIII*,' pp. 55–62, and *eadem*., 'The *Annus Domini* and the *Sexta Aetas*,' pp. 190–203.

59 Bede, *DT* 22, lines 3–4, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 607: *Huius anno XLII Dominus nascitur, conpletis ab Adam annis ĪĪĪDCCCCLII, iuxta alios ŪCXCVIIII*. See Chapter Three for further discussion.

60 Bede, *DT* 22, lines 6–7, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 607. See Chapters Three and Five for further discussion.

61 See *Etymologiae* 5.39 (26), ed. Lindsay; and *Chronica Maiora*, 237 (a), ed. Martín. See Chapter Three for discussion of Isidore's efforts to synchronise contradictory traditions for the date of the Crucifixion.

62 Isidore, *Chronica Maiora*, 237, ed. Martín, pp. 114–15. Cf. Isidore, *Etymologiae*, 5.39 (26), ed. Lindsay.

63 Isidore, *Chronica Maiora*, 236, ed. Martín, pp. 112–13.

64 Isidore, *Chronica Maiora*, 235 (a), ed. Martín, p. 113. See Origen, *Contra Celsum*, 2.30, ed. M. Borret, *Contre Celse, I (Livres I et II)*, *SC* 132 (Paris 2005) pp. 360–62; Orosius, *Historiarum*, 6.20.4–8, 6.22.5–9, ed. Zangemeister, pp. 418–21 and 428–29; Prosper of Aquitaine, *De Vocatione omnium gentium*, 2.16, *PL* 51.648–722 at 704; Leo the Great, *Sermo* 82.2 (Recension B), ed. A. Chavasse, *CCSL* 138A (Turnhout 1973) pp. 510–11. See O'Reilly, 'Islands and idols at the ends of the earth', pp. 119–45 at 120–24.

65 Bede, *DTR, s.a.* 3952, lines 971–78, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 495. See further in Chapter Five.

66 Bede, *DT* 22, lines 38–39, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 609. C. Isidore, *Etymologiae*, 5.39 (35), ed. Lindsay; *Chronica Maiora*, 328, ed. Martín, pp. 154–55.

67 See Appendix 3, 'Chronological comparison of Bede's chronicles' for what follows. Bede's source or sources for this Constantine's reign are unknown.

68 Mc Carthy, *The Irish Annals*, pp. 124–25. Mc Carthy has argued that these reigns were transmitted to Bede from Iona and were the work of Adomnán: *The Irish Annals*, p. 137. This does not explain how and in what form this information came to Adomnán in the first place, however, and it seems most likely that a list (however imperfect) of imperial reigns was circulating in Britain and Ireland. See Chapter Three for my

discussion of the hypothesis that Bede used a 'Vulgate source' which underpinned the Irish annals; as noted there, the annals may share an unknown source with the 'Chronicle of 725,' but there is little evidence for such a source's influence on the 'Chronicle of 703'.

69 Isidore only named Valentinian in the *Chronica minora*; both emperors were named in the *Chronica maiora*: *Etymologiae* 5.39 (37), ed. Lindsay; *Chronica Maiora*, 348, ed. Martín.

70 Bede, *DT* 22, lines 44–45, ed. Mommsen in Jones, pp. 609–10. Kendall and Wallis suggest that Bede took this information from Augustine's *De Civitate Dei*, p. 129, note 269. Cf. Orosius, *Historiarum*, 7.32.3, ed. Zangemeister, p. 512.

71 Orosius, *Historiarum*, 7.33.1, ed. Zangemeister, p. 515.

72 See Appendix 3, 'Chronological comparison of Bede's chronicles'. These figures are predicated on the basis that AM 3952, the year of the Incarnation, is dated to 1 BC, rather than AD 1. The total years for the first five ages add up to 3952, indicating that mathematically my inference is correct. Whether year counting is inclusive or exclusive in this period is not at all clear in the sources. For further discussion of this problem, see MacCarron, 'Bede, Irish *computistica* and *Annus Mundi*,' p. 295.

73 See Chapter Six for discussion of the relationship between Bede's AM and AD years.

74 For Peter, see Bede, *DT* 22, lines 8–9, ed. Mommsen in Jones, pp. 607–8; Fabian: Bede, *DT* 22, lines 27–28, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 609. Cf. Isidore, *Chronica Maiora*, 299 and 301, ed. Martín, pp. 142–43. Gregory: Bede, *DT* 22, line 67, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 611. Bede's information about Gregory did not come from Isidore. See Appendix 4, 'Table of Popes in the *Liber Pontificalis*, *De temporibus* and *De temporum ratione*'.

75 Bede, *DT* 22, line 37, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 609; tr. Kendall and Wallis, *Bede: On the Nature of Things*, p. 128. This information is not in Isidore, see *Etymologiae*, 5.39 (35), ed. Lindsay; *Chronica Maiora*, 325, ed. Martín, pp. 152–53.

76 *Liber Pontificalis*, 30, ed. L. Duchesne, *Le Liber Pontificalis: Texte, Introduction et Commentaire*, Vol. 1 (Paris 1886) p. 72; tr. R. Davis, *The Book of Pontiffs (Liber Pontificalis): The Ancient Biographies of the First Ninety Roman Bishops to AD 715* (Liverpool 2010) p. 12. Duchesne's text records 16,000 which suggests a transcription error somewhere in transmission; Davis' translation has 17,000, and this appears to be the traditional figure.

77 Bede, *DT* 22, line 76, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 611.

78 See *Liber Pontificalis*, 81.3 and 82.2, ed. Duchesne, pp. 350 and 353–54.

79 On the creation of the *Liber Pontificalis* and the beginnings of contemporaneous recordings, see T.F.X. Noble, 'A new look at the *Liber Pontificalis*,' *Archivum Historiae Pontificae* 23 (1985) pp. 347–58; K. Blair-Dixon, 'Memory and authority in sixth-century Rome: the *Liber Pontificalis* and the *Collectio Avellana*,' in K. Cooper and J. Hiller (eds.), *Religion, Dynasty, and Patronage in Early Christian Rome, 300–900* (Cambridge 2007) pp. 59–76; Davis, *The Book of Pontiffs*, p. XIII.

80 See M. Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Library* (Oxford 2006, repr. 2008) p. 227. Bede's *Martyrology* mentions the translation of Augustine's relics, which is the last entry in the 'Chronicle of 725': *Martyrologium*, 28 August, *PL* 94.799–1148 at 1023–24; *DTR* 66, *s.a.* 4680, lines 2061–66, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 535. On the *Martyrologium*, see Alan Thacker, 'Bede and his Martyrology,' in E. Mullins and D. Scully (eds.), *Listen, O Isles, Unto Me: Studies in Medieval Word and Image in Honour of Jennifer O'Reilly* (Cork 2011) pp. 126–41.

81 See further in Chapter Five for discussion of links between Rome and Northumbria in Bede's lifetime.

82 *Vita Ceolfridi*, 39, ed. and tr. C. Grocock and I. Wood, *Abbots of Wearmouth and Jarrow* (Oxford 2013) pp. 78–121 at 118–20.

83 This is the view of Duchesne, p. CCXXIII; cf. R. Davis, *The Lives of the Eighth-Century Popes (Liber Pontificalis): The Ancient Biographies of Nine Popes from AD 715 to AD 817* (Liverpool 2007) p. 2.

84 See Appendix 4, 'Table of Popes in the *Liber Pontificalis*, *De temporibus* and *De temporum ratione*'.

85 Hilliard, 'Bede and the changing image of Rome,' p. 40.

86 *DTR* 66, *s.a.* 4639, lines 1880–81, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 527. See also *DTR* 66, *s.a.* 4258, lines 1374–76; *s.a.* 4290, lines 1399–402; *s.a.* 4649, lines 1930–33; *s.a.* 4665, lines 1985–89; *s.a.* 4671, lines 2029–34, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 508; 509; 529; 531; 533.

87 *DTR* 66, *s.a.* 4639, lines 1909 and 1917, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 528.

88 *DTR* 66, *s.a.* 4403, lines 1588–90, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 516. See Krusch (ed.), *Studien zur Christlich-Mittelalterlichen Chronologie*, p. 247.

89 *DTR* 66, *s.a.* 4591, lines 1820–25, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 525.

90 See *Munich Computus* 63, lines 26–28, ed. and tr. Warntjes, *Munich Computus*, p. 292. For discussion, see Ó Cróinín, 'A seventh-century Irish computus,' pp. 405–30, repr. in Ó Cróinín, *Early Irish History and Chronology*, pp. 99–130 at 103–4. See Chapter One for the *Munich Computus*.

91 Much of Bede's notice for John I is taken from Gregory's *Dialogues*: *s.a.* 4480, lines 1694–96, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 520. On Bede's knowledge of the Acts of the Lateran Council, see Jennifer O'Reilly, '"Know who and what he is": The context and inscriptions of the Durham Gospels Crucifixion image,' in R. Moss (ed.), *Making and Meaning in Insular Art* (Dublin 2007) pp. 301–16 at 314, and *eadem*., 'Bede and Monothelitism,' in O'Reilly, *History, Hagiography and Biblical Exegesis*, pp. 145–66. See further in Chapter Five.

92 R. McKitterick, 'Roman texts and Roman history in the early Middle Ages,' in C. Bolgia, R. McKitterick and J. Osborne (eds.), *Rome Across Time and Space: Cultural Transmission and the Exchange of Ideas, c. 500–1400* (Cambridge 2011) pp. 19–34; *eadem*., 'The representation of Old Saint Peter's basilica in the *Liber Pontificalis*,' in R. McKitterick, J. Osborne, C.M. Richardson and J. Story (eds.), *Old Saint Peter's, Rome* (Cambridge 2013) pp. 95–118.

93 Hilliard, 'Bede and the changing image of Rome,' p. 41.

94 See further in Chapter Five.

95 *DT* 22, lines 68–69, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 611: tr. Kendall and Wallis, *Bede: On the Nature of Things*, p. 130.

96 *DTR* 66, *s.a.* 4557, lines 1762–64, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 523. *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People* [*HE*], bk 1:23, ed. and tr. B. Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors (Oxford 1969, repr. 2001) p. 68.

97 Bede, *DT* 22, line 57, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 610. See Kendall and Wallis, *Bede: On the Nature of Things*, p. 129, note 285.

98 See D. Scully, 'Bede's *Chronica Maiora*: Early insular history in a universal context,' in J. Graham-Campbell and M. Ryan (eds.), *Anglo-Saxon/Irish Relations Before the Vikings* (Oxford 2009) pp. 47–73.

99 *LP* 14.2. ed. Duchesne. *LP* does not record the name of the emperor while Eleutherius was pope.

100 *DTR* 66, lines 1619–20, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 517.

101 On Bede's sources from Canterbury, see now, Shaw, *The Gregorian Mission to Kent in Bede's Ecclesiastical History*.

102 *DTR* 66, *s.a.* 4591, lines 1810–16, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 525. On the *plus minus* formula for indicating uncertainty about numbers, specifically age at death, see Mark A. Handley, *Death, Society and Culture: Inscriptions and Epitaphs in Gaul and Spain, AD 300–750*, BAR International Series 1135 (Oxford 2003) p. 92. See further in Afterword for knowledge of age at death in the early medieval period.

103 *DTR* 66, *s.a.* 3952, lines 971–78, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 495. See further in Chapter Five.

104 *DTR* 66, *s.a.* 4557, lines 1764–65, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 523.

105 *The Earliest Life of Gregory the Great*, 15–17, ed. B. Colgrave (Cambridge 1968) pp. 96–100. On the creation of this text, see A.T. Thacker, 'Memorialising Gregory

the Great: The origin and transmission of a papal cult in the seventh and early eighth centuries,' *Early Medieval Europe* 7 (1998) pp. 59–84, and C. Ireland, 'Some Irish characteristics of the Whitby *Life* of Gregory the Great,' in P. Moran and I. Warntjes (eds.), *Early Medieval Ireland and Europe: Chronology, Contacts, Scholarship: Festschrit for Dáibhí Ó Cróinín* (Turnhout 2015) pp. 139–78; on Bede's relationship with the Whitby *Life* in his account of Edwin, see J. Barrow, 'How Coifi pierced Christ's side,' pp. 693–706.

106 *HE* 1:23, ed. Colgrave and Mynors, p. 68. See Chapter Six for Bede and chronology in the *HE*.

107 Willibrord is identified as *est enim de Brittania gentis Anglorum* (for he is one of the English people from Britain): *DTR* 66, lines 1941–45, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 529. See Chapter Six for Willibrord.

108 Cuthbert and Etheldreda are also in Bede's *Martyrology*, underlining his belief that they were both universal saints: *Martyrologium*, 20 March and 23 June, *PL* 94.863 and 954.

109 Bede, *DT* 22, line 79, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 611.

110 *DTR* 66, lines 1963–65, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 530. Bede neglected to mention his poem in praise of Etheldreda in the chronicle, even though it is most likely that he had written it before 725; he noted in the *HE* that he had written it many years ago: *HE* 4:20 (19), ed. Colgrave and Mynors, p. 396.

111 *DTR* 66, lines 2023–27, ed. Mommsen in Jones, pp. 532–33.

112 *DTR* 66, *s.a.* 4518, lines 1717–19, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 521. See Harrison, *The Framework of Anglo-Saxon History*, p. 77. See Chapters Five and Six for Bede and AD dating.

113 Bede, *DT* 22, lines 63–64, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 610. Cf. Isidore, *Etymologiae*, 5.39 (40), ed. Lindsay; *Chronica Maiora*, 399, ed. Martín, pp. 194–95.

114 Bede, *DT* 22, lines 74–75, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 611. See Moreton, 'Doubts about the calendar,' pp. 50–65.

5   Nativity and Incarnation
in Bede's theology of time

We have seen how Bede's presentation of world history in his universal chronicles changed between 703 and 725. In the 'Chronicle of 725' events were treated in greater depth, and the exegetical meaning of many Old Testament events and personalities were highlighted, following Bede's approach in his biblical commentaries. This is not without precedent in the chronicle tradition, though the frequency with which it occurs here is unusual. This is also not the major departure from Bede's first chronicle that it might at first sight appear, although the laconic nature of entries in the 'Chronicle of 703' means Bede's methodology is less obvious. I have shown in Chapters Three and Four that patristic discourse influenced Bede's choice of chronology and he willingly applied exegetical methods in critiquing his sources: for example, looking to Josephus to supplement the scriptural record. The enhanced commentary between the first and second chronicles is reflected in Bede's exegesis, which developed substantially over the course of his career as he grew in confidence and stature. This can be seen in comparing his earliest scriptural commentaries, such as that on Revelation, believed to be roughly contemporary with *De temporibus*, with his later works, for example, that on the temple which is contemporary with *De temporum ratione*.[1] The context for Bede's work may in part account for this change, as many of his later writings appear to respond to contemporary circumstances; for example, he has a clear interest in reform as identified and discussed by Alan Thacker and Scott DeGregorio, amongst others.[2] The extent of Bede's corpus allows us to chart the development of his thought over the course of his career, and we can see his progression to becoming an authority in his own right.[3]

Bede's work on time does not entirely fit this pattern as I have argued in this book that his key chronological features were all introduced in the 'Chronicle of 703' and repeated in the later chronicle. These features are: (1) incorporating world chronicles in computistical textbooks; (2) structuring time on the six ages of the world; (3) using generations to measure time; (4) looking to the Vulgate, rather than the Septuagint, for chronology; and (5) emphasizing the Nativity, rather than Christ's Baptism or Passion, as the major chronological marker. These are not all Bedan innovations, of course; as outlined in the previous chapters, he was operating within the conventions of the world chronicle tradition and demonstrating his capacity to innovate within that tradition. Where he was most at odds

with mainstream chronography was in his treatment of the Nativity, Baptism and Passion, as he preferred to emphasise the beginning of Christ's life. Specifically, in his presentation of the Nativity we can detect significant development over the course of his career.

Baptism, Passion and Nativity in world chronicle tradition

The key chronological event in early Christian chronography was the Baptism of Christ, dated to the fifteenth year of Tiberius following Luke's gospel. XV Tiberius is the only clear date provided in the gospels, and Luke placed the beginning of John the Baptist's mission in that year (Luke 3:1–3). Luke also related that soon afterwards Christ was baptised by John, when he was about 30 (Luke 3:23). Although Luke's gospel does not say that Christ was 30 in XV Tiberius, this has been inferred since Late Antiquity;[4] in Christian chronography XV Tiberius became linked with the consulships of the Gemini,[5] and this was equated with 5,228 years from Creation and potentially AM 5229.[6] For those who followed the short chronology of Christ's ministry, the Passion was also dated to XV Tiberius, and the consulships and years from Creation just given, and this year was the starting point of *Annus Passionis* dating.[7]

The beginning of Christ's public ministry was frequently regarded as more important than his birth, as can be seen in the greater attention given to the announcement of his Baptism in world chronicles; in contrast, his birth lacked any secure means of dating.[8] Augustine acknowledged this ambiguity concerning whether the beginning of Christ's life or the beginning of his mission were more important for salvation history in variously starting the sixth age with either the Nativity or the Baptism when discussing the world ages.[9] When adapting the six ages framework to a world chronicle, Isidore began the sixth age with the Nativity during the reign of Augustus, perhaps following Roman ideas that saw Augustus's reign as the beginning of a new age, and paid due attention to the Passion. In the *Chronica Minora* he placed Christ's birth and Crucifixion during the appropriate imperial reign, and in the *Chronica Maiora* he dated the birth by imperial years only, and the Passion by imperial years and years from Creation.[10]

Bede, in contrast, paid more attention to Christ's Nativity and treated this as the focal point of salvation history. In the 'Chronicle of 703' he reversed Isidore's practise by dating the Nativity using imperial years and years from Creation, and the Passion only by imperial years.[11] In the second chronicle, Bede's announcement of the Nativity is far more elaborate, as we can see when comparing *De temporibus* (first) with *De temporum ratione*:

> *Octauianus ann. LVI. Huius anno XLII Dominus nascitur, conpletis ab Adam annis ĪĪĪDCCCCLII, iuxta alios ŪCXCVIIII.*
>
>   Octavian reigned for fifty-six years. Our Lord was born in the forty-second year of his reign, when three thousand nine hundred and fifty-two (or according to others, five thousand one hundred and ninety-nine) years had passed since Adam.[12]

S.A. 3952

Anno Caesaris Augusti XLII, a morte uero Cleopatrae et Antoni, quando et Aegyptus in prouinciam uersa est, anno XXVII, olympiadis centesimae non-agesimae tertiae anno tertio, ab urbe autem condita anno DCCLII, id est eo anno quo conpressis cunctarum per orbem terrae gentium motibus firmissi-mam uerissimamque pacem, ordinatione Dei, Caesar conposuit, Iesus Chris-tus filius Dei sextam mundi aetatem suo consecrauit aduentu.

In the forty-second year of Caesar Augustus, and the twenty-seventh [year] after the death of Cleopatra and Antony, when Egypt was turned into a [Roman] province, in the third year of the one hundred and ninety-third Olympiad, in the seven hundred and fifty-second from the foundation of the City [of Rome], that is to say the year in which the movements of all the peoples throughout the world were held in check, and by God's decree Caesar established genuine and unshakeable peace, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, hallowed the Sixth Age of the world by his coming.[13]

In the 'Chronicle of 725' Bede used five different chronological systems in an impressive example of synchronistic dating to announce the arrival of Christ in human history: (1) imperial years, (2) counting time from the annexation of Egypt by the Romans, (3) the Olympiad, (4) years from the foundation of Rome (*ab Urbe condita*; AUC) and (5) years from Creation – as is the case for all notices in the second chronicle. This range of chronologies indicates the event's importance and perhaps reflects the attention given to the Baptism of Christ in XV Tiberius in ear-lier chronicles, which from Eusebius-Jerome onwards was marked by a range of chronological synchronisations. The influence of Eusebius is also apparent here, however, as Bede's synchronism is clearly influenced by Eusebius's announce-ment of Christ's birth in his *Historia ecclesiastica*, as transmitted to Bede through Rufinus's Latin translation.[14] Bede added the year from the foundation of Rome, most probably from Orosius, and the Olympiad notice.[15]

In contrast, Bede's notice for the Passion is short and varies little between the chronicles of 703 and 725:

Tiberius ann. XXIII. Huius ann. XVIII Dominus crucifigitur.

Tiberius ruled for 23 years. The Lord was crucified in the eighteenth year of his reign.[16]

S.A. 3984

Anno XVIII imperii Tyberii, dominus sua passione mundum redemit.

In the eighteenth year of the reign of Tiberius the Lord redeemed the world by his Passion.[17]

Hence the Passion is dated by imperial years on both occasions and by counting the years from Creation in the second chronicle. It is striking how little atten-tion Bede paid to the Passion of Christ in his chronicles, considering its impor-tance in Christian faith; this will be returned to later. Similarly, he did not refer to Christ's Baptism and the scriptural date of XV Tiberius in the first chronicle,

despite its importance in Christian chronographic tradition. Bede remedied this in the 'Chronicle of 725' with a curious discussion of chronology.

Sub anno 3981, he noted that Christ was baptised by John in XV Tiberius and began proclaiming the kingdom of heaven. This is followed by the observation that, according to Eusebius, 4,000 years had elapsed from the beginning of the world in the Hebrew system of years, which Bede notes is 19 years longer than his calculation and refers the reader to his earlier discussion of Eusebius's chronology.[18] Eusebius did not explicitly say that Christ's Baptism occurred 4,000 years after Creation, rather he noted that the 81st jubilee according to the Hebrews began the following year.[19] Bede concluded this notice by recording that Eusebius believed Christ's Baptism took place 5,228 years from Creation. Eusebius's calculations add up to 5,228 years but, again, he did not include this figure: Jerome included the total number of years from Creation at the end of his addition to Eusebius, but Eusebius appears to avoid all explicit statements of the age of the world in the chronicle.[20] It is interesting, therefore, that Bede twice computed the information given by Eusebius to fill in 'gaps' that were almost certainly deliberate to highlight the differences between their chronologies. Bede appears to have used this as an opportunity to underscore the reliability of his chronology compared to the alternatives. Considering the importance of Christ's Baptism in several chronicles, it is hardly coincidental that he used this moment to challenge other traditions regarding the age of the world.[21]

For Bede, the arrival of Christ in historical time was the fundamental moment in human salvation and overshadowed his Baptism and Passion, which were the major chronological markers for earlier chroniclers. Why he did this, and how he presented the coming of Christ, reveal the complex interplay of chronology and theology in Bede's thought on time.

Bede and counting time from the coming of Christ

Bede is, of course, famous for counting time from Christ's arrival in the world. *Anno Domini* dating provides the underlying chronological framework for his *Historia ecclesiastica gentis anglorum* and the work played a key role in disseminating this chronology in medieval Europe. Bede had used AD years in other works prior to the *Historia*: for example, twice in the 'Chronicle of 725' and twice in the *Historia abbatum*; these works will be examined shortly, and we will turn to the role of AD in the *Historia* in Chapter Six.

It is likely that Bede's interest in the beginning of Christ's life for chronological purposes was influenced by the Easter tables of Dionysius Exiguus, which counted time using years from the Incarnation and the 15-year indiction cycle. Dionysius, famously, recorded that he did not wish to preserve the memory of the Roman emperor, Diocletian, 'the impious persecutor', whose reign was the starting point for the Alexandrian Easter tables that he had translated: instead he dated from the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ (*domini nostri Iesu Christi*).[22] In looking to the Incarnation Dionysius may have been pointedly targeting the table of Victorius of Aquitaine, which also followed Alexandrian principles and used

the *Annus Passionis* of Prosper of Aquitaine along with consular years to measure time.[23] Victorius's Easter computus greatly influenced ideas of chronology in the Insular World and, as we have seen, seventh- and eighth-century computistical texts from Ireland focussed their attention on the year of the Passion.[24] In contrast, the date for the Incarnation was rarely mentioned in Irish sources, and when it was this was often to denigrate Dionysius's chronology, in texts such as the 'Victorian Prologue of AD 699'.[25] Much of Bede's knowledge of computus came from Ireland, as discussed in Chapter One; but as we have seen, he expressed independence of thought in matters of chronology that reflected his deep patristic inheritance. I argued in Chapter Three that this mindset underlies his adoption of Vulgate chronology, and it is also important for understanding his emphasis on Christ's Nativity.

This is not to suggest that Bede was the first to count time from the beginning of Christ's life, however, for there are notable examples of this practise prior to Bede. Eusebius presented the number of years from the Nativity at the conclusion of book 7 of his *Historia ecclesiatica*, and there was an increase in year counts from the Incarnation in the late seventh and early eighth centuries, which was most likely influenced by the Dionysian Easter table; these will be examined in Chapter Six.

It seems likely that, as, with many of his contemporaries, Bede's focus on the Incarnation was influenced by Dionysius's Easter table. However, in Bede's case this may have been aided by Dionysius's explanation of his choice of chronology in his letter to Petronius, where he noted that focussing on the beginning of Christians' hope would more clearly elucidate the Passion.[26] The harmony of Christ's life from Incarnation to Passion and Resurrection is central to salvation history and this fusion between theology and chronology would have especially appealed to a thinker such as Bede.[27] As we have seen, he emphasised the sacramental significance of the Incarnation from the beginning of his career. However, the way in which he presented this event changed between 703 and 731 and this can especially be seen in his choice of terminology. He variously talked about Christ's birth, *Dominus nascitur* ('Our Lord was born') in *De temporibus*; the coming of Christ, *Iesus Christus filius Dei sextam mundi aetatem suo consecrauit aduentu* ('Jesus Christ, the Son of God, hallowed the Sixth Age of the world by his coming'), in *De temporum ratione*; and the Incarnation, *anno incarnationis dominicae* ('in the year of the Incarnation of the Lord'), in the *Historia ecclesiastica*. At the beginning of his career he appears to have used terms like Nativity and Incarnation interchangeably, but by the time he wrote the *Historia* he consistently referred to the Incarnation in matters of chronology. As we shall see in the next section, this evolution in his terminology reveals his continuing development as a theologian and chronographer.

Nativity and Incarnation in Bede's thought

The general view in modern historiography is that chroniclers and chronographers in the Western Church did not distinguish between the Incarnation and

Nativity until after the time of Bede. Georges Declercq suggested that Eastern chronographers introduced such a distinction much earlier than their colleagues in the West.[28] There certainly appears to be no distinction between Incarnation and Nativity in *De temporibus*, as in Bede's discussion of the formulas for the headings of the paschal table (*DT* 14), he used both terms interchangeably:

> *Si nosse uis quot sunt anni ab Incarnatione Domini, scito quot fuerint ordines indictionum . . . Isti sunt anni Natiuitatis Domini.*
> If you want to find out the number of years from the Incarnation of the Lord, take cognizance of the number of indictional cycles. . . . These are the years of the Lord's Nativity.[29]

In *De temporibus* 16, Bede spoke of Christ's coming in the flesh:

> *Quinta deinde usque ad aduentum Saluatoris in carnem generationibus et ipsa xiiii, porro annis dlxxxviiii extenta.*
> The fifth [age], up to our Lord's advent in the flesh, extends for fourteen generations, and five hundred and eighty-nine years.[30]

In these two chapters we can see that Bede used different descriptions for Christ's appearance in the world and did not distinguish between Incarnation and Nativity. In contrast, he was far more precise in his use of language later in his career, as is especially clear in his exegesis.

In a Christmas homily on Luke's account of the Nativity (Luke 2:1–14), Bede discussed the prophetic nature of the census, which ensured that Christ would be born in Bethlehem and argued: 'both cities would be distinguished by the hidden mysteries of his Incarnation, namely the one [Nazareth] would shine forth with the honour of his conception, and the other [Bethlehem] with the honour of his nativity'.[31] It is clear that Incarnation and Nativity are not synonymous here. The Incarnation began, for Bede, in Nazareth at the Annunciation while the Nativity took place in Bethlehem. It is notable that whenever Bede talked about Bethlehem it was always as the place of the Lord's birth. This can be seen in his *De locis sanctis*, which is based on an earlier text of the same name by Adomnán of Iona, and in his abridgement from *De locis sanctis* in the *Historia ecclesiastica*.[32] Adomnán, similarly, talked about the Lord's birth, not Incarnation, in his description of Bethlehem.[33]

The emphasis on Bethlehem as the place of the Lord's birth is repeated in Bede's exegesis. In his commentary on Ezra and Nehemiah, Bede drew parallels between Christ and David, as Christ was born from David's seed and worshipped as a king by the Magi in the same place where David had been born and anointed king.[34] In his commentary on Luke's gospel, Bede discussed Christ's birth in Bethlehem and engaged in word-play to suggest the appropriateness of Christ, the living bread from heaven (see John 6:51), being born in a place which means 'house of bread', a longstanding etymological interpretation of Bethlehem.[35] Bede also picked up this theme in his homily on Luke's account of the

Nativity already referred to. In addition to locating Christ's birth in Bethlehem, Bede argued that the beginning of Christ's Incarnation took place in Nazareth, also in fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecy, specifically Isaiah 11:1: 'A rod will come out of the root of Jesse, and a nazareus will ascend from his root'. Bede followed patristic tradition in relating this to Christ and explained to his audience that 'the inviolate virgin Mary arose from the stock of David, and from her flesh, in the city of Nazareth, the Lord assumed the true reality of flesh without the contamination of the flesh'.[36]

The importance of Nazareth for the Incarnation is also demonstrated in Bede's homily on the Annunciation, as it was there that the divinity took on human nature and was carried in Mary's womb. Bede interpreted Mary's famous acceptance of God's will in the phrase 'be it done to me according to thy word' from Luke 1:38 as: 'let it be done that in my womb the Son of God may put on the condition of human substance, and may proceed like a bridegroom from his chamber (Ps 19:5/18:6) for the redemption of the world'.[37] This idea also appeared in Bede's homily on the wedding feast at Cana (John 2:1–14), where he wrote that God took on human nature in the Virgin's womb.[38] Here Bede underlined that the Incarnation encompassed the entirety of Christ's life, beginning with the Annunciation in Nazareth and continuing to his death on the Cross in Jerusalem.[39] In essence, the miracle that began in the Virgin's womb at the Annunciation made Christ's redemptive sacrifice on the Cross possible.

While the Incarnation began at the Annunciation, Bede demonstrated in his exegesis that it was revealed to the world at the Nativity in Bethlehem. In discussing the role of the shepherds in announcing Christ's birth, he wrote that an angel appeared to them and they were surrounded by a bright light because Christ was the light of the world, and it was fitting that the heralds of his birth should bring the freshness of heavenly light to his human witnesses.[40] Bede argued that this also fulfilled Old Testament prophecy, specifically Psalm 112 (111):4: 'A light has arisen in the darkness for those who are righteous in heart'. The angels appearing to the shepherds outside Bethlehem and the shepherds' subsequent testimonies was regarded as a sign that the miracle of the Incarnation had taken place. Bede wrote that this was the final sign which confirmed for Mary that 'the Lord had come in the flesh'.[41]

That, in Bede's thought, the Incarnation extended both before and beyond the events in Bethlehem to cover the entirety of Christ's life up to his death on the Cross and Resurrection is also apparent in this homily as he urged his monastic brethren to emulate the shepherds of Bethlehem in praising God:

> *Si enim illi sola adhuc natiuitate eius cognita reueris sunt glorifiantes et laudantes Deum in omnibus quae audierant et uiderant, quanto magis oportet nos qui totam incarnationis illius seriem ex ordine cognouimus qui sacramentis illlius inbuti sumus in omnibus gloriam eius ac laudem non solum uerbis sed etiam factis praedicare neque umquam obliuisci quod ideo Deus homo natus est ut nos ad imaginem et similitudinem suae diuinitatis renascendo reficeret.*

>   For if they, who as yet only knew about his nativity, went back glorify-
> ing and praising God in everything which they had seen and heard, we who
> know about the whole progress of his incarnation in succession, and who are
> imbued with his sacraments, are all the more obliged to proclaim his glory
> and praise in everything, not only in words, but also in deeds, and never to
> forget that the reason why God was born as a human being was so that he
> might restore us through our being born anew to the image and likeness of
> his divinity (John 3:3).[42]

Bede's theology on these matters is fully orthodox and in line with patristic exege-
sis.[43] The recognition that the miracle of the Incarnation began in Mary's womb
and that she therefore had an important role in salvation history was most articu-
lately expressed by Augustine on several occasions in his corpus of writings.[44]
Augustine's position can be linked with the works of Jerome and Ambrose, each
of whom defended the full humanity of Christ during debates about his nature
and personhood.[45] Their ideas subsequently informed the orthodox refutation of
the Christological controversies, for example, in the writings of Leo the Great.[46]
Emphasis on the birth and childhood of Christ, and Mary's role as mother of God
(*Theotokos*), served to demonstrate Christ's full humanity in opposition to the
arguments of Nestorius and the Monophysites, and these positions were articu-
lated at the fifth-century ecumenical councils of Ephesus (431) and Chalcedon
(451).[47] Developments in the liturgy also reflected these theological concerns.
Éamonn Ó Carragáin has identified a series of liturgical chants that presented
the unity of Christ's life from his Incarnation in the Virgin's womb and birth at
Christmas, his death on the Cross and descent into hell, and his triumphant return
to heaven his course complete.[48] He has also argued that the artistic programme
of early eighth-century Rome reveals the belief that the Incarnation covered the
totality of Christ's life, from the Annunciation to the Passion and Resurrection.[49]
Bede's exegesis reveals his familiarity with the Western Church's position on
these matters and the 'Chronicle of 725' shows his knowledge of the develop-
ment of these controversies.[50] His theology of time, as expressed in his exegetical
works, indicates that he regarded the Nativity as an event, located to Bethlehem,
while the Incarnation covered the duration of Christ's life on earth and began in
Nazareth at the moment of the Annunciation.

   This is significant for Bede's chronographical and historical works; although
he never wavered in believing that the coming of Christ in historical time was
the fundamental moment in human history, his terminology in this regard subtly
shifted over his career. We have seen that in *De temporibus* Incarnation and Nativ-
ity are synonymous, while his language is far more precise in his exegesis, leading
to a distinct difference between Incarnation and Nativity; indeed, the Nativity is
not even seen as the beginning of the Incarnation, rather it is the moment that the
Incarnation was revealed to humanity. Consequently, he stopped referring to the
birth of Christ in matters of chronology.[51] For example, he never talked about
Christ's Nativity or birth in *De temporum ratione*. We have already seen his pres-
entation of the beginning of the sixth age in both works – in the first he spoke of

Christ's birth and in the second the coming of Christ made the sixth age of the world holy.[52] This shift can also be seen in his discussion of the years of the Lord's Incarnation. In his chapter on the headings of the Dionysian table in *De temporibus* (14), as we have seen, Bede used Incarnation and Nativity interchangeably. In the corresponding, though substantially longer, explanation of these headings in *De temporum ratione* (47–62), Bede presented a firm defence of Dionysius's AD chronology and consistently talked about the Incarnation (Chapter 47).

This usage is also reflected when counting time from the coming of Christ in his later works. The earliest example is in *Historia abbatum*, where Bede twice used *Anno Domini* dates. The first occasion is his description of the foundation of Wearmouth, AD 674, which he dated by the incarnation, the indiction, and the regnal year of Ecgfrith: *anno ab incarnatione Domini sescentesimo septuagesimo quarto, indictione secunda, anno autem quarto imperii Ecgfridi regis* ('in the 674th year from the Incarnation of the Lord, the second indiction, and the fourth year of the reign of King Ecgfrith').[53] The anonymous *Life of Ceolfrith*, also produced in Wearmouth-Jarrow, dated the foundation of Wearmouth using the same three dating systems: *anno dominicae incarnationis sexcentesimo septuagesimo quarto, indictione secunda, anno autem quarto imperii Egfridi regis* ('in the 674th year of the Incarnation of the Lord, the second indiction, and the fourth year of the reign of King Ecgfrith').[54] Both texts present the same information except for the form of AD that Bede used as, on this occasion, he preferred to count the years *from* the Incarnation, while the anonymous author counted the years *of* the Incarnation. Bede used both renderings in the *Historia ecclesiastica*, which will be examined later. It is possible that this three-part dating clause was preserved in the monastery, as there is evidence that charters from the late seventh century onwards were dated using AD and the indiction, and it seems likely that Bede and the anonymous author received their information from the same source.[55] Bede also used a second *Anno Domini* date in the *Historia abbatum*, for the death of Ceolfrith in AD 716: *anno ab incarnatione Domini septingentesimo sextodecimo* ('in the 716th year from the Incarnation of the Lord').[56] Bede used the same form of AD dating clause here. The *Vita Ceolfridi* did not include an AD date for Ceolfrith's death.

Returning to *De temporum ratione*, Bede twice dated from the Incarnation in the chronicle, and both times concern Easter dating. The first was to announce the beginning of Dionysius Exiguus's Easter tables: *Dionisius paschales scribit circulos, incipiens ab anno dominicae incarnationis DXXXII, qui est annus Dioclitiani CCXLVIII* ('Dionysius wrote paschal cycles beginning from the year 532 of the Incarnation of the Lord, which is the year 248 of Diocletian').[57] The second recorded Iona's acceptance of the Dionysian Easter following the teaching of Egbert in *anno ab incarnatione domini DCCXVI* ('in the year 716 from the Incarnation of the Lord').[58] Both dating clauses clearly count from the Incarnation and Bede used both of the previously mentioned forms of AD-dating.

Finally, and most significantly, Bede consistently dated from the Incarnation in his *Historia ecclesiastica*, and notably always from the Incarnation, never the Nativity. There are 47 Incarnation dating clauses in the main text of the *HE* (Books

1–5:23) and 50 AD entries in the chronological recapitulation of *HE* 5:24.[59] The first such clause is actually what we would regard as BC, as Bede dated Julius Caesar's invasion of Britain to 60 years before the Incarnation of the Lord (*HE* 1:2). Of the 47 clauses, 29 are variants of *annus dominicae incarnationis* ('year of the Incarnation of the Lord');[60] 18 are *annus ab incarnatione Domini* ('year from the Incarnation of the Lord').[61] Two of the latter are presented *ab incarnatione dominica* ('year from the Incarnation of the Lord'), with *dominica* as an adjective which does not change the meaning (*HE* 3:14; 4:26). The 'ab' clause may represent a more traditional chronological formation, like *ab Urbe condita*, from the foundation of the city (Rome). Apart from book 1, where the 'ab' form is the most common, in the other four books the former rendering is used most often. In the chronological synopsis at the end of the book, Bede presented the first four events using Incarnation dating clauses and prefaced the rest simply with *anno* ('in the year'). Of those four events, both forms were used twice, alternately. This suggests that Bede's variation may be a matter of style.

Bede's full dating clause was consistently not translated in modern versions of the *HE*, which has meant little attention has been paid to the correct formulation with its key emphasis on the Incarnation.[62] However, every one of Bede's *Anno Domini* dates is effectively a concise creedal statement, as it asserts faith in the Incarnation and would undoubtedly have made an impression on readers unfamiliar with such a chronology outside of lists of years in Easter tables or isolated examples on charters.[63] Bede's orthodox Christology is apparent in his exegesis, as we have seen, and makes a further subtle appearance in the *HE* in his touching account of Aidan. Bede was at pains to protect Aidan from criticism for following what he regarded as an inaccurate Easter reckoning, variously suggesting that Aidan did not know the better method, he was compelled by public opinion, or he could not reject the authority of his superiors.[64] In defending Aidan, Bede observed:

> *In quo tamen hoc adprobo, quia in celebratione sui paschae non aliud corde tenebat, uenerabatur et praedicabat quam quod nos, id est, redemptionem generis humani per passionem, resurrectionem, ascensionem in caelos mediatoris Dei et hominum hominis Iesu Christi.*
>
> I do approve of this, that in his celebration of Easter he had no other thought in his heart, he reverenced and preached no other doctrine than we do, namely the redemption of the human race by the passion, resurrection, and ascension into heaven of the one mediator between God and men, even the man Christ Jesus (1 Tim 2:5).[65]

Jennifer O'Reilly has demonstrated the importance of 1 Timothy 2:5 as one of the proof texts for Christ's full humanity and divinity in response to the Christological controversies. She has argued that in applying this text to Aidan, Bede highlighted the orthodox faith of the Ionan community despite their particularity concerning Easter.[66] Such a didactic insertion is unusual in the narrative of the *HE* as Bede normally allowed his sources, such as the papal letters, to fulfil this role.[67] Indeed,

in relation to the Easter Controversy the most assertive support for the Dionysian practise, and the only actual mention of Dionysius Exiguus in the text occurs in Ceolfrith's letter to Nechtan (*HE* 5:21) rather than in Bede's words. Bede's assertion that all right-thinking people believe in the 'one mediator between God and men, even the man Christ Jesus' is surprisingly direct for him in the *HE* and underscores his and the book's orthodoxy. His commitment to orthodox Christology is confirmed in his choice of chronology, which reminds the reader of what was the fundamental moment in human salvation, the Incarnation of the Lord.

There is an enormous development from treating Nativity and Incarnation as synonymous to consistently counting years from the Incarnation, and from including a couple of isolated Incarnation dates in works such as the *Historia abbatum* to Incarnation dating providing the underpinning chronology for a work of history. The *HE* is the apogee of Bede's developing theology of time, and Chapter Six will examine the broader context for the creation of his chronological framework. The final part of this chapter will consider what may have led to these developments in his thought.

Nativity and Incarnation in early medieval theology

I have argued that Bede focussed on the beginning of Christ's life rather than the Passion and Resurrection for matters of chronology because of his knowledge of the Christological controversies. Bede was also clearly influenced by Dionysius's Easter table, and Dionysius's decision to count time from the Incarnation should similarly not be divorced from contemporary theological developments, which the Latin- and Greek-speaking Dionysius would undoubtedly have been familiar with. Bede's knowledge of these debates, especially seventh-century developments, such as the emergence of monothelitism is apparent in his later works, for example, the 'Chronicle of 725'. Jennifer O'Reilly has shown that Bede possessed the Acts of the Lateran Council of 649, and she has revealed his nuanced understanding of these controversies.[68] The frequency with which Northumbrian clerics, including many members of Bede's own community, went to Rome in the late seventh and early eighth centuries presents a valid context for Bede's receipt of such knowledge and materials; the missions of Theodore of Canterbury and John the Archcantor, who were escorted to Britain by Bede's founder abbot, Benedict Biscop in the 660s and 670s respectively, are particularly significant in this context, but lesser-known pilgrims are also important for Bede's intellectual endeavours.[69]

In analysing the differences between Bede's first and second chronicles in Chapter Four, the continuing expansion of the Wearmouth-Jarrow library was identified as an important factor, as Bede had access to sources in 725 that he appears not to have possessed in 703. The return of figures such as Hwætberht, Ceolfrith's successor as abbot of Wearmouth-Jarrow, and later the members of Ceolfrith's party who delivered the *Codex Amiatinus* to Rome after his death, are significant conduits of both books and knowledge of events in Rome in this period. The papacy of Sergius I (r. 687–701), who gave a grant of indemnity to

Wearmouth-Jarrow during Ceolfrith's abbacy,[70] may be particularly important in this context, as he is credited with formulating Marian devotion in the Western church. The four major Marian feasts –Purification/Presentation, Annunciation, Dormition and Nativity of the Virgin – had been brought to Rome from the East over the course of the seventh century and were linked together during Sergius's papacy.[71] The liturgical celebration of Mary is important, as Georges Declercq suggested that Eastern chronographers made a clear distinction between the Incarnation and Nativity much earlier than their colleagues in the West because the feast of the Annunciation was officially introduced as one of the most important festivals in the calendar of the Byzantine church in the second quarter of the sixth century; in contrast, the emphasis in the West lay on the Nativity.[72] The Annunciation began to be celebrated at Rome from around AD 660 and was given new impetus when linked with the other three Marian feasts by Sergius. There is sufficient evidence to suggest that this devotion to Mary had reached Anglo-Saxon England by the early eighth century.[73]

It is certainly the case that the most Roman-facing members of the Northumbrian Church in this period practised Marian devotion, as both Wearmouth-Jarrow and Wilfrid's community at Hexham in the early eighth century had churches dedicated to Mary: Wearmouth had a separate Marian church from the 680s[74] and, a generation later, Wilfrid devoted the final years of his life to Mary after a near-death experience while returning from his last visit to Rome and built a church for her at Hexham.[75] There is also evidence for devotion to Mary at Lindisfarne, as the reconstruction of Cuthbert's seventh-century wooden coffin revealed a collection of images, including a Virgin and Child, which is regarded as the earliest surviving such representation outside of Rome.[76] There were also churches dedicated to Mary at Canterbury, Lastingham, Lichfield and Barking by the early eighth century.[77]

Bede's writings also show an awareness of devotion to Mary in Rome, which was given a renewed impetus during the short-lived papacy of John VII (705–7).[78] John commissioned a funerary chapel dedicated to Mary in St Peter's, which Bede described in the 'Chronicle of 725' as 'of the most beautiful workmanship'.[79] Bede also famously referred to the paschal candles in a Roman Church dedicated to Mary that counted time from the Passion in his discussion of Incarnation years in *De temporum ratione* 47. This visit can be dated to AD 701 and AP 668, and it most likely recalls the delegation Ceolfrith sent to Rome during the papacy of Sergius to receive letters of privilege for Jarrow.[80]

In addition to Marian devotion in Anglo-Saxon England, Éamonn Ó Carragáin has argued that the four Marian festivals were celebrated at Wearmouth-Jarrow during Bede's lifetime and may have been known at Hexham prior to the death of Wilfrid in 709.[81] They were certainly known to Bede later in his career.[82] The *Liber Pontificalis* emphasised all four Marian feasts in its account of Sergius's reign, and we know that Bede had a relatively contemporary version of that text before he completed the 'Chronicle of 725'.[83] Bede discussed the feast of the Purification at length in his explanation of the Roman months in *De temporum ratione* 12. He presented it as a Christian improvement on the pagan purificatory

rites called after *Februus*, as outlined in the Roman calendar and known to Bede through the *Disputatio Chori et Praetextati*, a selection of modified excerpts of Macrobius's *Saturnalia* preserved in the *Sirmond computus*.[84] In his much shorter discussion of the Roman months in *De temporibus*, *Februus* was also linked to the god of purifications, but Bede made no reference to the Christian festival.[85] This does not prove he was unaware of it, as *De temporibus* does not allow for many digressions; however, as Bede tended to introduce Christian elements when possible into his technical discussions, it may suggest that he was unfamiliar with that Marian feast in 703.

Bede's knowledge of the Annunciation's place in the Church calendar can also be seen in its commemoration in his *Martyrology*, where he linked it with the Crucifixion:

> VIII Kal. April: *Apud civitatem Galilaeae Nazareth annunciatio Dominica; et Jerosolymae ubi Dominus noster Christus crucifixus est.*[86]
>   25 March: At the city of Galilee, Nazareth, the annunciation of the Lord; and Jerusalem where Christ our Lord was crucified.

There is some debate about the original structure of Bede's *Martyrology*, as such texts were usually added to by subsequent generations. Mary Clayton has shown that the best manuscripts only cover until late July which suggests the evidence for the first half of the year is more reliable.[87] The synchronism between the Annunciation and the Crucifixion is significant, as the 25 March was one of the traditional dates for the Passion in the Western Church. This date is computistically incompatible with Bede's Easter chronology from Dionysius's tables, but such problems were well known and addressed, to a limited extent, by Bede in *De temporum ratione* 47.[88] Bede's *Martyrology* is not, of itself, proof that the feast of the Annunciation was celebrated in Anglo-Saxon England in Bede's time; indeed, in this regard, it is notable that Bede's homily on the Annunciation is placed in the Advent season rather than on the festival's date in March. Bede is commenting on Luke 1:26–38, which is the reading used for the feast of the Annunciation and the reading associated with the Advent Ember days in Rome during the seventh century. This may suggest that the older tradition of the liturgical commemoration of the Annunciation in Advent was still practised in Wearmouth-Jarrow during Bede's time, or at least it was the practise when the homilies on the gospels were brought together.[89] However, whenever it was celebrated, Bede's exegesis reveals his awareness of the Annunciation's importance as the beginning of the Incarnation. The links between Wearmouth-Jarrow and Rome in the early eighth century provide evidence for Bede's knowledge of these changes in liturgical practises and context for the developments in his theology.

Bede's shift in terminology from Christ's Nativity to Incarnation reveals much about his theology of time. That he used both terms synonymously in *De temporibus* indicates that it was only after 703, following reports from Rome and his developing exegesis of the scriptural text, that he came to distinguish between these two terms. Bede came to regard the Nativity as a localised event in time, whereas the

Incarnation covered the totality of Christ's life on earth from the Annunciation in Nazareth to the Passion and death on the Cross in Jerusalem. This is significant for his thought on time, as in counting very specifically from the Incarnation of the Lord rather than the Nativity in his later works, Bede was making a theological as much as a chronological statement.[90] In the next chapter we shall consider the implications of Bede's theology of time for his telling of Anglo-Saxon history in his most famous work, the *Historia ecclesiastica gentis anglorum*.

Notes

1   Bede, *Expositio Apocalypseos*, ed. R. Gryson, *CCSL* 121A (Turnhout 2001); Bede, *De templo*, ed. D. Hurst, *CCSL* 119A (Turnhout 1969). On Bede's exegesis, see C.W. Jones, 'Some introductory remarks,' pp. 115–98, repr. in W.M. Stevens (ed.), *Bede, the Schools and the Computus* (Aldershot 1994) IV; Ray, 'Bede, the Exegete, as Historian,' pp. 125–40; *idem*., 'What do we know about Bede's Commentaries?' *Recherches de Théologie ancienne et médiévale* 49 (1982) pp. 5–20; J. O'Reilly, 'Introduction,' pp. XVII–LV; *eadem*., 'Islands and idols at the ends of the earth,' pp. 119–45.
2   A. Thacker, 'Bede's ideal of reform,' pp. 130–53; S. DeGregorio, ' "Nostrorum socordiam temporum",' pp. 107–22; and O'Brien, *Bede's Temple*, pp. 130–55.
3   See P. Darby and F. Wallis, 'Introduction: The many futures of Bede,' in P. Darby and F. Wallis (eds.), *Bede and the Future* (Farnham 2014) pp. 1–21, who have identified key stages in the development of Bede's thought. See also Scott DeGregorio's discussion of Bede's famous phrase, 'following in the footsteps of the fathers'; 'Introduction: The new Bede,' in S. DeGregorio (ed.), *Innovation and Tradition in the Writings of The Venerable Bede* (Morgantown 2006) pp. 1–10, and other essays in that collection.
4   Bede attested to this tradition in *De temporum ratione*, 47, lines 60–63, ed. Jones, pp. 430–31.
5   See *Fasti Consulares* in *Chronograph of 354*, ed. T. Mommsen, *MGH Auctores antiquissimi*, 9, *Chronica Minora*, 1 (Munich 1981) pp. 50–61 at 57; Prosper of Aquitaine, *Epitoma Chronicon*, 388–91, ed. T. Mommsen, *MGH Auctores antiquissimi*, 9, *Chronica Minora*, 1 (Munich 1981) pp. 385–485 at 409–10; Victorius of Aquitaine, *Cyclus Paschali*, ed. Krusch, *Studien* II, pp. 27–52 at 27; *Consularia Constantinopolitana*, ed. in Burgess, *The Chronicle of Hydatius and the Consularia Constantinopolitana*, pp. 215–45 at 227; Cassiodorus, *Chronica*, §632–36, ed. T. Mommsen, *MGH Auctores antiquissimi*, 11, *Chronica Minora*, 2 (Berlin 1894) pp. 120–61 at 136–37.
6   See Eusebius-Jerome, *Chronicon*, ed. Helm, *Griechische Christliche Schriftsteller*, pp. 173–74; Prosper, *Epitoma Chronicon*, 388–91, ed. Mommsen, pp. 409–10; Victorius of Aquitaine, *Prologus Victorius*, Chapter 9, ed. Krusch, *Studien* II, pp. 17–26 at 24. See Chapter Four, note 72 for inclusive versus exclusive dating in the Late Roman world and early Middle Ages. Alden Mosshammer has argued that XV Tiberius could be any 12-month period from 1 October 27 to 31 December 29 in our chronology: *Easter Computus*, p. 18.
7   See Chapter Three for discussion of the length of Christ's ministry following the Synoptic and Iohannine traditions, and for AP dating in the chronicle of Prosper of Aquitaine and the Easter table of Victorius of Aquitaine.
8   See Chapter Three.
9   See Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* 22.30, lines 130–38, ed. B. Dombert and A. Kolb, *De Civitate Dei, Libri XI – XXII*, CCSL 48 (Turnhout 1985) pp. 865–66; *De Diversis Quaestionibus* LXXXIII, 58.2, lines 61–72, ed. A. Mutzenbecher, *CCSL* 44A (Turnhout 1975) pp. 106–7.
10   See discussion of Isidore's Passion data in Chapter Three. On the reign of Augustus as a new age in Roman thought, see, e.g., Appian, *Civil Wars* 4:4, tr. White, *Roman History, Vol. IV: The Civil Wars*, pp. 146–47.

11 For discussion of Bede's Passion data, see M. MacCarron, 'Bede, Irish *computistica* and *Annus Mundi*'.

12 *De temporibus*, 22, lines 2–4, ed. C.W. Jones, *CCSL* 123C (Turnhout 1980) p. 607; tr. Kendall and Wallis, *Bede: On the Nature of Things*, p. 126.

13 *De temporum ratione*, 66, *s.a.* 3952, lines 971–78, ed. C.W. Jones, *CCSL* 123B (Turnhout 1977) p. 495; tr. Wallis, *Bede: The Reckoning of Time*, p. 195.

14 Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 1.5, ed. G. Bardy, *Eusèbe de Césarée, Histoire Ecclésiastique, SC 31* (Paris 1952) p. 21. See further Chapter Six for Eusebius and dating the Nativity.

15 Orosius, *Historiarum adversum paganos libri VII*, 6.22.5–6, ed. C. Zangemeister (Leipzig 1889) p. 428. On Olympiads and dating the Nativity, see Cuppo, 'Felix of Squillace and the Dionysiac Computus I,' pp. 110–36; and Holford-Strevens, *The History of Time*, pp. 122–23.

16 *De temporibus* 22, lines 6–7, ed. Jones, p. 607; tr. Kendall and Wallis, *Bede: On the Nature of Things*, p. 126.

17 *De temporum ratione*, 66, *s.a.* 3984, lines 1007–8, ed. Jones, p. 496; tr. Wallis, p. 196.

18 See Chapter Four, p. 101 for Bede's critique of Eusebius's chronology.

19 Jubilees are a Hebrew designation that last 50 years: 80 x 50 = 4000. Isidore included Jubilees in his discussion of the divisions of time in the *Etymologiae*, book 5. 37.3–4, ed. Lindsay.

20 He may have not only wished to avoid comparisons of the Hebrew and Greek scriptural traditions but also been concerned about presenting Christianity's relatively short age of the world to critics of the religion's supposed novelty, who were aware of Babylonian astronomical observations going back millennia. See Chapter Three for discussion.

21 See further in Chapter Three, and MacCarron, 'Bede, Irish *computistica* and *Annus Mundi*'.

22 Dionysius, *Epistola ad Petronium*, ed. Krusch, *Studien* II, pp. 63–68 at 64, lines 11–12.

23 See Blackburn and Holford-Strevens, *The Oxford Companion to the Year*, p. 778, which regards this as a 'studied insult' to Victorius,

24 Texts such as *De ratione conputandi*, the *Munich Computus*, and the *Sirmond* manuscript which also contained a Victorian 532-year table. See Chapter Three for discussion.

25 See I. Warntjes, 'A newly discovered Prologue of AD 699,' pp. 255–84.

26 Dionysius, *Epistola ad Petronium*, ed. Krusch, *Studien* II, p. 64, lines 12–14.

27 For discussion of these ideas see further in this chapter and M. MacCarron, 'Bede, *Annus Domini* and the *Historia ecclesiastica gentis anglorum*,' in J.E. Rutherford and D. Woods (eds.), *The Mystery of Christ in the Fathers of the Church* (Dublin 2012) pp. 116–34, esp. 126–28, and *eadem.*, 'Christology and the future in Bede's *Annus Domini*,' pp. 161–79.

28 Declercq, *Anno Domini*, pp. 142–43.

29 *De temporibus* 14, lines 2–8, ed. Jones, pp. 598–99; tr. Kendall and Wallis, *Bede: On the Nature of Things*, p. 115. This formula is one of the occasions when Bede records the present year as AD 703.

30 *De temporibus* 16, lines 16–18, ed. Jones, p. 601; tr. Kendall and Wallis, *Bede: On the Nature of Things*, p. 118.

31 Bede, *Homeliarum Evangelii, Libri II*, *Hom*. 1.6, lines 84–90, ed. D. Hurst, *CCSL* 122 (Turnhout 1955) p. 39; tr. L.T. Martin and D. Hurst (Kalamazoo MI 1991) p. 55: *Diuinitus constat esse procuratum ut ad suam quisque ciuitatem pergens ibi censum profiteretur quatenus hoc edicto generali parentes nostri saluatoris de Nazareth in Bethleem uenire contingeret sicque ad conplenda uaticinia prophetarum utraque ciuitas incarnationis eius insigniretur archanis una uidelicet conceptionis altera natiuitatis honore praefulgens*. Cf. Bede, *In Lucae Evangelium Expositio*, book 1, lines 1160–63, ed. D. Hurst, *CCSL* 120 (Turnhout 1960) p. 48.

32 Bede, *De locis sanctis*, c. 7.1, ed. J. Fraipont, *CCSL* 175 (Turnhout 1965) pp. 249–80; *HE* 5.16, ed. Colgrave and Mynors, p. 508.

33 Adomnán, *De locis sanctis*, book 2:1–3, ed. D. Meehan (Dublin 1983) pp. 74–76.

34 Bede, *In Ezram et Neemiam*, book 3 (on Neh. 3.16), lines 482–85, ed. D. Hurst, *CCSL* 119A (Turnhout 1969) p. 351.

35 *In Lucae*, book 1, lines 1152–63, ed. Hurst, p. 48. In this Bede was influenced by the exegesis of Gregory the Great amongst others, see, e.g., Gregory, *Homeliarum in euangelium*, *Hom*. 8, *PL* 76.1104A.

36 *Hom*. 1.6, lines 98–102, ed. Hurst, p. 39; tr. Martin and Hurst, p. 55: *Egresssa est ergo uirga de radice Iesse et nazareus de radice eius ascendit quia intemerata uirgo Maria de stirpe Dauid orta est de cuius carne dominus in ciuitate Nazareth ueritatem carnis sine inquinamento carnis adsumpsit.*

37 *Hom*. 1.3, lines 229–31, ed. Hurst, p. 20; tr. Martin and Hurst, p. 27: *fiat ut in meo utero filius Dei humanae substantiae habitum induat atque ad redemptionem mundi tamquam sponsus suo procedat de thalamo.*

38 *Hom*. 1.14, lines 38–41, ed. Hurst, p. 96.

39 See *Hom*. 1.14, lines 24–35, ed. Hurst, p. 96.

40 *Hom*. 1.6, lines 219–35, ed. Hurst, pp. 42–43.

41 *Hom*. 1.7, line 150, ed. Hurst, p. 50; tr. Martin and Hurst, p. 70: *Nouerat tunc uenisse in carne dominum.*

42 *Hom*. 1.7, lines 159–67, ed. Hurst, p. 50; tr. Martin and Hurst, p. 71.

43 The relevance of patristic Christology for Bede's understanding of the incarnation and its significance for his thought on time is discussed at greater length in my essay, 'Bede, *Annus Domini* and the *Historia ecclesiastica gentis anglorum*'.

44 Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, Ps 18 (19), *enarratio* 1.6 and *enarratio* 2.6, ed. E. Dekkers and J. Fraipont, *CCSL* 38 (Turnhout 1956) pp. 102–3 and 109–10; *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, Ps 44 (45), st. 3, ed. Dekkers and Fraipoin, p. 495; *Confessionum*, 4.12, ed. L. Verheijen, *CCSL* 27 (Turnhout 1981) p. 50; *In Iohannis Evangelium Tractatus*, 8.4, ed. D. Radbodus Willems, *CCSL* 36 (Turnhout 1954) p. 84; *Sermo* 195.3, *PL* 38.1019; *Sermo* 188.2, *PL* 38.1003–4; *Sermo* 192.3, *PL* 38.1013; *In Epistolam Ioannis ad Parthos tractatus*, 1.2, ed. P Agaësse, *Sources Chretienne* 75 (Paris 1994) p. 116.

45 See, e.g., Jerome, *Tractatus Varii*, *Homilia De Nativitate Domini*, ed. D.G. Morin, *CCSL* 78 (Turnhout 1958) pp. 503–59 at 529. Ambrose, *De Incarnationis Dominicae Sacramento*, c. 5 (35), *PL* 16.862. On this complex subject, see by way of introduction, A. Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition: I, From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon (451)*, tr. J. Bowden (London 1965, rev. ed. 1975); A. Grillmeier with T. Hainthaler, *Christ in Christian Tradition: II, from the Council of Chalcedon (451) to Gregory the Great (590–604)*, Parts 1–2, tr. P. Allen and J. Cawte (London 1987 and 1995).

46 Leo summarised the Western Church's position in his letter to Flavian that has come to be known as the 'Tome': *Chalcedon*, ed. N.P. Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, Vol. 1 (Georgetown 1990) pp. 77–82. See J. O'Reilly, 'Bede and Monothelitism,' in J. O'Reilly (ed.), *History, Hagiography and Biblical Exegesis*, pp. 145–66.

47 On Mary as *Theotokos*, see 'Third letter of Cyril to Nestorius,' and 'Formula of Union,' in *Ephesus*, ed. Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, Vol. 1, pp. 58–59 and 69–70. The growth in devotion to Mary seen in Marian foundations at Rome and icons of the Virgin and Child from the fifth through eighth centuries may be linked to these theological developments. See John Osborne, 'Early medieval painting in San Clemente, Rome: The Madonna and child in the niche,' *Gesta* 20.2 (1981) pp. 299–310; Éamonn Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood*, pp. 239–47.

48 Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood*, pp. 321–25. These chants are inspired by Psalm 18 (19).

49 Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood*, pp. 244–45.

50 See further in this chapter for discussion of the Anglo-Saxon and specifically Bedan understanding of the Christological controversies and: O'Reilly, '"Know who and what he is",' pp. 301–16; and *eadem*., 'Bede and Monothelitism'.

51 Bede referred to the Nativity of Christ in the letter to Plegwin when defending his chronology and noted his calculation of the years to Christ's Nativity; he does not equate Nativity with Incarnation here, but, as we have seen in *De temporibus*, which he was defending in the letter, his focus was on Christ's birth: *Epistola ad Pleguinam* 5, ed. C.W. Jones, *CCSL* 123C (Turnhout 1980) pp. 617–26 at 619.

52 *De temporibus* 22, lines 2–4, ed. Jones, p. 607; *DTR* 66, *s.a.* 3952, lines 971–78, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 495. And see earlier.

53 Bede, *Historia abbatum*, c. 4, ed. and tr. Grocock and Wood, *Abbots of Wearmouth and Jarrow*, pp. 32–33; amended translation as Incarnation is inaccurately presented as birth by Grocock and Wood. I agree with the argument of Grocock and Wood that Bede wrote the *Historia abbatum* soon after learning of Ceolfrith's death in 716; see Grocock and Wood, 'Introduction,' *Abbots of Wearmouth and Jarrow*, pp. XVIII–XXII.

54 *Vita Ceolfridi*, c. 7, ed. and tr. Grocock and Wood, *Abbots of Wearmouth and Jarrow*, pp. 84–86; translation mine. On discussion of the relationship between these two texts, see Grocock and Wood, 'Introduction,' in *Abbots of Wearmouth and Jarrow*, pp. LXI–XCV. For the argument that both texts are by Bede, see J. McClure, 'Bede and the *Life of Ceolfrid*,' *Peritia* 3 (1984) pp. 71–84, a view that is comprehensively challenged by Grocock and Wood, and see C. Stancliffe, 'Review of C. Grocock and I.N. Wood (ed. and tr.), *Abbots of Wearmouth and Jarrow*,' *Peritia* 28 (2017) pp. 259–63.

55 See further in Chapter Six.

56 *Historia abbatum*, 23, ed. Grocock and Wood, p. 72; translation mine.

57 *De temporum ratione*, 66, *s.a.* 4518, lines 1717–19, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 521. Bede also recorded the first year of the Dionysian Easter table in the 'Chronicle of 703', on that occasion dated by imperial reign: *De temporibus*, 22, line 64, ed. Jones, p. 610.

58 *De temporum ratione*, 66, *s.a.* 4670, line 2027, ed. Mommsen in Jones, p. 533.

59 For the full list of dating clauses see Appendix 5, 'Incarnation dating clauses in the *Historia ecclesiastica*'. See Chapter Six for further discussion.

60 The date for Caesar's invasion is *ante uero incarnationis Dominicae tempus anno sexagesimo*, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People* [*HE*], bk 1, c. 2, ed. and tr. B. Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors (Oxford 1969, repr. 2001). The others are: *HE* 1:6, 1:13, 2:1, 2:3, 2:7, 2:14, 2:18, 2:20, 3:4 (twice), 3:8, 3:26, 3:27 (twice), 4:1, 4:5, 4:12 (twice), 4:23, 4:26, 5:8 (twice), 5:18, 5:22, 5:23 (four times).

61 *HE* 1:3, 1:4, 1:5, 1:9, 1:10, 1:11, 1:15, 1:23, 1:34, 2:5, 2:9, 3:14, 3:20, 4:5, 4:26, 5:6, 5:7, 5:22.

62 The only occasions when Colgrave and Mynors translated the word 'Incarnation' into English was in *HE* 4:5 for Bede's notice for the death of Oswiu, p. 349, and for Caesar's invasion in the 60th year before the incarnation in *HE* 5:24, p. 561. Their translation was reprinted without amendments in the accessible Oxford World Classics edition by R. Collins and J. McClure (Oxford 1999).

63 For further discussion of contemporary usage of AD and Bede's adoption of AD-dating, see Chapter Six. I have considered elements of this chronology in earlier publications. See 'Bede, *Annus Domini* and the *Historia ecclesiastica gentis anglorum*' and 'Christology and the Future in Bede's *Annus Domini*'.

64 *HE* 3:4, 3:17 and 3:25.

65 *HE* 3:17, ed. and tr. Colgrave and Mynors, pp. 266–67.

66 O'Reilly, *St Paul and the Sign of Jonah*, Jarrow Lecture 2014, p. 25; 'The multitude of Isles and the corner-stone', pp. 201–27 at 223–24; and 'Bede and the Dating of Easter,' in O'Reilly, *History, Hagiography and Biblical Exegesis: Essays on Bede, Adomnán and Thomas Becket*, ed. M. MacCarron and D. Scully (Oxford and New York 2019) pp. 167–85 at 167–76.

67 See O'Reilly, 'Islands and idols at the ends of the earth,' pp. 124–28. 1 Tim 2:5 was quoted earlier in the book in pope-elect John's letter to the Irish, from which Bede

included excerpts in *HE* 2:19. On this letter, see Ó Cróinín, '"New Heresy for Old",' pp. 505–16, repr. in Ó Cróinín, *Early Irish History and Chronology*, pp. 87–98.

68 O'Reilly, '"Know who and what he is"', especially pp. 313–14; 'Bede and Mono-thelitism'; and 'Bede and the Dating of Easter:'.

69 For Benedict Biscop and Theodore, see *Historia abbatum*, 3, ed. Grocock and Wood, p. 28; and Benedict Biscop and John the Archcantor, see *Historia abbatum*, 6, ed. Grocock and Wood, pp. 34–36, and *HE* 4:18. For John the Archcantor's teaching, see J.D. Billett, *The Divine Office in Anglo-Saxon England, 597 – c. 1000* (London 2014) pp. 91–98.

70 Bede, *Historia abbatum*, 15, ed. Grocock and Wood, pp. 58–60; *Vita Ceolfridi*, 20, ed. Grocock and Wood, p. 98. See further in this chapter.

71 Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood*, pp. 97–103 and 237. Sergius instituted solemn processions for the four Marian feasts; see *Liber Pontificalis*, ed. L. Duchesne, Vol. 1 (Paris 1886) pp. 371–76 at 376. On the development of Marian liturgy at Rome, see J.M. Guilmard, 'Une Antique Fête Mariale au 1er Janvier dans la ville de Rome ?' *Ecclesia Orans* 11 (1994) pp. 25–67; M. Fassler, 'Mary's Nativity, Fulbert of Chartres, and the Stirps Jesse: liturgical innovation circa 1000 and its afterlife,' *Speculum* 75.2 (2000) pp. 389–434 at 392–95.

72 Declercq, *Anno Domini*, pp. 142–43. Declercq emphasises that this was during the reign of Justinian.

73 See Mary Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin Mary in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge 1990) pp. 30–38.

74 Bede, *Historia abbatum*, 9, ed. Grocock and Wood, p. 44. See Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood*, pp. 92 and 238, who notes that Benedict Biscop brought an icon of the Virgin on his return from Rome with John the Archcantor (*Historia abbatum* 6) and the church dedicated to Mary was built soon afterwards around the same time that the Acts of the Lateran Council were deposited in Wearmouth's library.

75 *Vita Wilfridi*, 56, ed. B. Colgrave (Cambridge repr. 1985) pp. 122–23.

76 See E. Kitzinger, 'The Coffin-Reliquary,' in C.F. Battiscombe (ed.), *The Relics of Saint Cuthbert: Studies by Various Authors Collected And Edited with an Historical Introduction* (Oxford 1956) pp. 202–304 at 248–64 and Plates IV and X. For the coffin, see J.M. Cronyn and C.V. Horie, *St Cuthbert's Coffin: the history, technology and conservation* (Durham 1985), and 'The Anglo-Saxon Coffin: Further investigations,' in G. Bonner, D. Rollason and C. Stancliffe (eds.), *St Cuthbert, His Cult and His Community to AD 1200* (Woodbridge 1989) pp. 247–56.

77 *HE* 2:6, ed. Colgrave and Mynors, p. 156; *HE* 3:23, ed. Colgrave and Mynors, p. 288; *HE* 4:3, ed. Colgrave and Mynors, p. 344; *HE* 4:10, ed. Colgrave and Mynors, p. 362.

78 On John's Marian devotion, see Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood*, pp. 240–45.

79 *De temporum ratione*, 66, *s.a.* 4659, lines 1976–78, ed. Jones, p. 530; tr. Wallis, p. 234: . . . *opera pulcherrimo*. On John's funerary chapel including a description of the mosaic over the altar and its possible impact on Anglo-Saxon pilgrims, see Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood*, pp. 241–46.

80 Bede, *Historia abbatum*, 15, ed. Grocock and Wood, pp. 58–60; *Vita Ceolfridi*, 20, ed. Grocock and Wood, p. 98. Ceolfrith followed the example of Benedict Biscop, who had earlier secured such a privilege for Wearmouth during the papacy of Agatho, *Historia abbatum*, 6, ed. Grocock and Wood, p. 36.

81 Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood*, p. 99.

82 Cf. Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin Mary*, pp. 36–37.

83 See Chapter Four and note 71 for Sergius in the *Liber Pontificalis*.

84 *De temporum ratione*, 12, ed. Jones, pp. 322–23. See the recently published edition by Leofranc Holford-Strevens, *The* Disputatio Chori et Praetextati*: The Roman Calendar for Beginners* (Turnhout 2019).

85 *De temporibus*, 6, ed. Jones, p. 589. Bede's source here again is the *Disputatio Chori et Praetextati*.

86 Bede, *Martyrologium*, *PL* 94.866.
87 Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin Mary*, p. 36. All four Marian feasts are in Bede's *Martyrologium*, but due to concerns about manuscript transmission the feasts of the Dormition and Nativity (15 August and 8 September) are less well attested. See also Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood*, p. 99 and note 111.
88 See Nothaft, *Dating the Passion*, pp. 85–88.
89 On Advent Ember days at Rome, see Fassler, 'Mary's Nativity,' pp. 392–95, and Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood*, pp. 85–86.
90 For chronological purposes, Bede counted from the beginning of the incarnation. However, as Bede never says when he thought the year began – January, March or December are possible – we cannot tell from when he actually began counting years or what occurred in AD 1. For example, if Bede began the year in January does AD 1 follow the Annunciation and Nativity of the previous year or anticipate these events? From a mathematical analysis of Bede's AM chronology in his chronicles, I inferred that AM 3952 = 1 BC, but this is unconfirmed. See Appendix 3, 'Chronological comparison of Bede's chronicles' and Chapter Four, note 72.

6 Bede, Dionysius Exiguus and *Anno Domini* chronology

The culmination of Bede's decades of thinking and experimenting with chronology can be found in the *Historia ecclesiastica gentis anglorum*, specifically in his adoption of *Annus Domini* to recount Anglo-Saxon history. This work transformed the potential of the *Anno Domini* system, playing a major role in its dissemination across Carolingian Europe, and is a significant factor in the chronology's subsequent and long-lasting popularity. Bede was not the only figure to use *Anno Domini*, of course, and earlier suggestions that he invented this system misrepresented his contribution to chronography. Bede's specific innovation was in applying *Anno Domini* years to past events to create a retrospective timeline of Anglo-Saxon history and thereby make AD a historical chronology. Efforts to interrogate Bede's AD dates have consistently failed to appreciate the magnitude of this achievement; typical analyses of his chronology do little more than add minor clarifications, for example, 'correcting' his date for the sack of Rome from 409 to the conventional 410, while neglecting the immense challenge he faced in synchronising a wide range of unconnected chronologies and the originality of his decision to undertake such a task in an account of his people's history in the first place. Prior to Bede, AD had primarily been used either for contemporary dating purposes or for counting time into the future, as we shall see in examining the early development of this system and its contemporary usage in Anglo-Saxon England and Francia. Through understanding the broader backdrop we can better contextualise Bede's achievement in transforming the future of *Anno Domini* chronology.

Annus Domini prior to the seventh century

Bede received AD years from the Easter table of Dionysius Exiguus, compiled in AD 525 with a start date in 532. The importance of the Dionysian computus for Bede is well known – this Easter reckoning had been adopted at the Synod of Whitby in 664, and Bede's computistical texts, *De temporibus* and *De temporum ratione*, were written in support of it.[1] Dionysius is thought to have created the *Anno Domini* chronological system, but he has been wrongly blamed for 'inventing' Christ's birth date. The general view now is that he used an already existing date, of which there are many examples, several of which focus on the interval

between the birth of Christ and a notable event.[2] Clement of Alexandria observed that there were 194 years from the birth of Christ to the death of Emperor Commodus, in a passage that counted years from a whole range of events to the reign of Commodus.[3] Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 263–339), who dated the birth of Christ by imperial years and from the deaths of Antony and Cleopatra in book one of his *Historia ecclesiastica*, recorded, at the end of book 7, that the destruction of the Christian places of worship occurred 305 years after the Nativity – that is, what is known as the Great Persecution of AD 303.[4] That Eusebius's date differs slightly from ours indicates the difficulty, familiar to any scholar of early Christian chronology, in dating the events of Christ's life.[5] Book 7 is the only time that Eusebius counted from the Nativity in his *Historia*, and its importance should therefore not be overestimated. Imperial years are the main chronological system in his work, which would be expected in the genre of *historia*.[6] Alden Mosshammer has observed, in a slightly different context, that '[I]t is one thing to count an interval from the Incarnation, another thing entirely to use the era of the Incarnation as a system for historical chronology'.[7] Eusebius did the former, while Bede did the latter, and Eusebius's count from the Nativity appears to have had little or no impact on subsequent generations.

Efforts to count time from Christ's life were solidified in the Western church by the association of chronology and computus in the Easter cycle of Victorius of Aquitaine, produced in AD 457.[8] Victorius was influenced by a chronographical tradition that did begin with Eusebius, as the focus on the Baptism of Christ in the fifteenth year of Tiberius in his world chronicle was of lasting significance. Prosper of Aquitaine created an epitome of Jerome's Latin translation of Eusebius but differed from his source in dating Christ's Baptism and Passion to XV Tiberius, which he equated with 5,228 years from Creation and used to inaugurate a new chronology, the *Annus Passionis* system.[9] Victorius adopted Prosper's chronology in the prologue to his Easter table, the first year of which was AP 1.[10] Every subsequent year in Victorius's table was then dated by AP and Roman consular years, which Prosper had also used in his chronicle, up to Victorius's own time. As Easter tables require prospective chronologies that can count forward indefinitely into the future, a system such as AP years was ideal and especially suitable for a computist as skilled as Victorius, who could create a 532-year cycle beginning with the first Easter in AP 1. The more familiar chronological systems from the early medieval world were less useful for Easter tables – regnal years and consular years were unsuitable because the identity and length of reign of future rulers is unknown, cycles such as the indiction were too short and other potential alternatives such as *Annus Mundi* were rarely used, perhaps because the numbers were so large and therefore impractical in the columns of Easter tables.[11]

Dionysius created his Easter table in AD 525, about 70 years after Victorius, and he must have been familiar with the Victorian Easter cycle, as this was the preferred Easter practise in Rome at the time. Dionysius dispensed with Victorius's chronological apparatus, instead adopting years from the Incarnation and the 15-year indiction cycle. It has been argued that Dionysius's AD years were a critique of Victorius's AP;[12] however, I have elsewhere argued that Dionysius may

have been inspired by theological concerns in his choice of chronology due to his emphasis on the Incarnation as the beginning of salvation and will return to this later.[13] It is also important to acknowledge that the chronological apparatus Dionysius was definitively replacing in his Easter table was the era of Diocletian; though this was the year count of his Alexandrian sources, Dionysius explicitly stated that he did not wish to tie his Easter table to the memory of the impious persecutor.[14]

The era of Diocletian was transmitted to the West in Alexandrian Easter tables and was one amongst many new chronological systems that were created from the second to seventh centuries, often in response to political developments.[15] It was probably adopted in Egypt as a result of Diocletian's provisional reorganisation of the empire when it lost its special status as a royal province. The Egyptians were required to follow the Roman consular year rather than the numbered imperial year, and as Diocletian was the last emperor whose regnal years were registered in the traditional style, Egyptian chronological texts continued counting from his reign even after his resignation in 305.[16] Diocletian's accession occurred in November 284 in our chronology, but counting from regnal years did not necessarily begin with the date of accession, and Mosshammer has shown that, for Dionysius at least, the first year of Diocletian is equivalent to AD 285.[17]

Other such chronologies from this period were the Era of Bostra, following the Roman annexation of this city in AD 105/106, and the Year of Carthage, after the city was conquered by the Vandals in 439.[18] The Spanish era also first appeared around the same time; although it counts from 38 BC, the oldest examples are Christian inscriptions in the late fourth century and written texts from the fifth century. However, its origins are unknown, and whether its antecedents were pagan or Christian is much disputed. Like the slightly later AP and AD, it has been linked to the life of Christ and early developments in computus – 38 BC is two 19-year cycles before 1 AD, and the era was certainly used in Spanish computistical sources.[19] We saw in Chapter Three that a wide range of chronological systems were used in world chronicles during this period. In addition, a plethora of other chronologies, frequently counting forward from recent events and often used for quotidian affairs, emerged at this time, further demonstrating that Late Antiquity was a dynamic period of chronological innovation and experimentation. When considering the development of AP and AD years, we should keep this lively backdrop in mind.[20]

Despite the wealth of options available to him, Dionysius opted to count time from the beginning of Christ's life and in doing so created an extraordinarily influential chronological system. As noted already, I have argued that Dionysius's choice was influenced by theological concerns and may be related to the ongoing Christological controversies. This can be indicated by his choice of language, as he noted he was counting from the Incarnation – the beginning of our hope.[21] This is the first occasion that I am aware of when such language is used in matters of chronology. Opponents of the view that Christ could not be both human and divine increasingly focussed on the miracle of the Incarnation to refute such hypotheses, as we saw in Chapter Five. However, it is difficult to identify precisely what Dionysius meant in using Incarnation, rather than Nativity, and it is possible that these terms were synonymous for him.[22] Nevertheless, whatever Dionysius intended by

his choice of chronological terminology, this was disseminated in his Easter tables and slowly adapted to new circumstances.

There is little evidence of Dionysius's chronology having much impact at first. One of the first references may be found in the work Victor of Tonenna, who recorded the interval of time from the Nativity to the completion of his continuation of Prosper's *Chronicle*. Of itself, this is not unusual; indeed, his date for the Nativity appears to have been taken from Eusebius-Jerome's chronicle, and he speaks about the Nativity, not the Incarnation. However, Mosshammer has argued that his interval of 567 years came from synchronising his indiction date with AD years from a Dionysian table, indicating he was using this table.[23] Cassiodorus, who praised Dionysius for his translation work in the *Institutiones*, did not specifically mention the Easter table, but Vivarium was important in disseminating the Dionysian Easter.[24] In addition, Cassiodorus – or someone in his circle – created the *Computus Paschalis*, a tract concerned with calendrical rules based on the Dionysian *argumenta* in 562.[25] The other major example of AD years in this early period is Felix's extension to the Dionysian table created in 626, which also extended Dionysius's chronological apparatus.[26] It is not until the late seventh century, and in Anglo-Saxon England, that we see the first expansions of AD chronology.

Anglo-Saxon England

The Dionysian Easter reckoning was adopted by the Northumbrian Church at the Synod of Whitby in 664. Wilfrid, later bishop of York (d. 709), but then recently returned from Rome, became the spokesperson for the so-called 'Roman' party and the former supporters of both the Irish and Victorian Easter reckonings who remained in Northumbria after Whitby accepted this reckoning.[27] Bede received *Anno Domini* chronology from the Dionysian tables, but he was by no means alone in doing so. The earliest examples of AD dates from Anglo-Saxon England are in a poem from Northumbria and on charters recording land transactions.

The Northumbrian poem is by Lutting and written in praise of his teacher, Bede, who we are told died in 681 in what is certainly the oldest example of AD dating from Northumbria. The poem is preserved in St Gall MS 254 and records that this Bede died: *Sexagies decimus iam tunc et nouies nonus annus ab aduentu Christi de uirgine nati fluxerat, et trina triplex indictio uiuit* ('The ten-times-sixtieth [600] and nine-times-ninth [81] year had passed since the advent of Christ, born of the Virgin, and the ninth indiction was in effect').[28] The combination of Incarnation dating and the indiction confirms that Lutting was using a Dionysiac computus. His chronological form is unusual but, as we shall see in the following examples, such variation is in keeping with the early adoption of the Dionysian reckoning.[29] The poet's acknowledgement of Mary's role corresponds with other examples of Marian devotion from late seventh-century England, as discussed in Chapter Five.

The oldest surviving authentic charter is much later than Lutting's poem. The 'Ismere Diploma' from Mercia, dated to 736: *anno ab incarnatione d[omi]ni n[ostr]i ih[es]u Xpi septincentissimo tricessimo. ui indictione quarta* ('the 736th year from the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ and fourth indiction').[30] The writer

of Ismere is usually believed to have taken AD dating from Bede's *HE*, completed in 731.[31] However, the direct influence of the Dionysian Easter table is far more likely if we consider other examples of AD dating on charters prior to 731. Several charters with AD dates predate 'Ismere', but as these are preserved in later copies doubts persist about their authenticity, especially their dating clauses and witness lists.[32] The authenticity of two charters from the kingdom of the Hwicce has, however, been convincingly presented – the foundation charter for Bath from 676, and a grant for Ripple from 680.[33] Two potentially authentic charters from Sussex have also been identified, one from King Nunna to his sister, Nothgyth, from 692 (S45), and the other from Nunna to the brethren of Selsey with a date of 714 (S42). One charter from Essex, confirmed by Æthelred of Mercia, appears to contain authentic early formulas including an Incarnation date of 704 (S65). Of 20 charters from Wessex, dated from 670 to 729, three are regarded as broadly trustworthy, each of which is a grant of land from King Ine, and they are dated to 701, 702 and 705/6 (S243, S244, S248). Charters from Kent in this early period rarely have AD years, apart from those linked to the mission of Augustine, which are undoubtedly later forgeries as they date by the Incarnation prior to the introduction of the Dionysian reckoning to Britain.[34] Excluding the early forgeries, there are 17 charters from Kent prior to 731, three of which have Incarnation dating and in each case this is thought to be a later addition.[35] Similarly, ten Mercian charters with AD dates from 664 to 727 are deemed highly questionable.[36] The only surviving charter from Northumbria is dated by the Incarnation but widely believed to be an unreliable later copy (S66).

Much more could be said about charters but, for present purposes, I wish to restrict my comments to the dating clauses of the nine which have the strongest cases for legitimacy, that is, the two from Sussex, two from the kingdom of the Hwicce, one from Essex, three from Wessex and 'Ismere' from Mercia.[37] Their dating clauses can be compared in Table 6.1. It will be noticed that the two Hwiccan charters cite Dionysius, indicating that their AD and indiction years are taken directly from his Easter table. All nine charters refer to the Incarnation, which, as we know, was the moment from which Dionysius counted, and all note that it was the Incarnation of Christ, the Lord, our Lord or our Lord Jesus Christ. Dionysius described his chronology as from the Incarnation of 'Our Lord Jesus Christ' in his letter to Petronius when explaining his Easter table.[38] The earliest charter from the Hwicce (S51) and the 'Ismere Diploma' adopt Dionysius's clause in full, while the others offer an abbreviation.

The forms of dating clause on these charters, and in Lutting's poem, all differ from Bede's preferred phrasing, which, as we saw in Chapter Five, was remarkably consistent from the time he first adopted this dating form in his *Historia abbatum* through to the *Historia ecclesiastica*. Bede consistently used either *anno ab incarnatione Domini* or *anno incarnationis dominicae* and never referred to the Incarnation of Christ or the full form of 'our Lord Jesus Christ' when dating an event. Indeed, the only time in his corpus that Bede explicitly referred to years *ab incarnatione domini nostri iesu christi* was in his discussion of AD years in Chapter 47 of *De temporum ratione*, when he quoted from the prologue to the continuation of Dionysius's table.[39] This difference in form indicates that Bede, Lutting and our charter writers all independently adopted AD dating from their shared source, Dionysius's Easter table. It confirms that the writer of the 'Ismere

Table 6.1 Incarnation dating clauses in Anglo-Saxon charters up to and including AD 735

Kingdom	Charter	Dating clause
Sussex	S45	*anno ab incarnatione Christi dcxcii*
	S42	*anno ab incarnacione Christi dccxiiii*
Hwicce	S51	*anno recapitulationis Dionisii, id est ab incarnatione Domini nostri Iesu Christi sexcentesimo septuagesimo sexto, indictione iiiita*
	S52	*Anno recapitulationis Dionisi. id est ab incarnatione Christi sexcentessimo. octuagessimo indictione sexta revoluta*
Essex	S65	*anno ab incarnatione Domini nostri dcciiii indictione ii*
Wessex	S243	*anno ab incarnatione Christi dcci, indictione xiiii*
	S244	*anno septingenteseimo secundo incarnacionis Jhesu Christi Domini nostri xva indicione*
	S248	*indictione iiii, mense Iunio, anno ab incarnatione Domini dccv*
Mercia	S89	*anno ab incarnatione domini nostri Jhesu Christi septincentissimo tricessimo. ui indictione quarta*

Diploma', though writing after the completion of Bede's *HE* and around the time it was beginning to be circulated, did not take their chronology from Bede. As none of the dating clauses discussed here directly copied Bede's practise, it further confirms that these charters may indeed be authentic and reveal contemporary behaviour.

The regional pattern of these early attestations of AD is also curious: Sussex, Wessex the kingdom of the Hwicce, Mercia and Essex under the influence of Mercia. Kenneth Harrison has argued that the Dionysian reckoning was used in Anglo-Saxon England even before the Synod of Whitby, which the evidence does not quite support, but he makes a solid case for linking the adoption of this dating with Wilfrid.[40] Patrick Sims-Williams has further argued that the two early charters from the kingdom of the Hwicce are linked to Wilfrid.[41] Wilfrid also frequented Sussex – Selsey is a Wilfridian foundation – during one of his periods of exile from Northumbria, and he was a regular visitor to Mercia.[42] Stephen's *Life of Wilfrid* writes that his protagonist converted and sustained Christians in the regions he visited when expelled from his diocese; it seems certain that Wilfrid would also have introduced the Dionysian reckoning to these communities, as he had previously done in Northumbria. He could very easily have adopted its chronological apparatus for charters written to secure his own foundations, or if he were witnessing grants of land to others. The evidence certainly suggests that an active proponent of the Dionysian Easter must be behind any late seventh-century initiative that results in both AD and indiction years appearing together.

Indeed, there may be one other key early witness to these practises, despite the dearth of charters from Northumbria, and that is the foundation of Bede's monastery, St Peter's, at Wearmouth, by Benedict Biscop in 674. In reviewing the AD dating clauses in Bede's writings in Chapter Five, I observed that both Bede and the anonymous author of the *Vita Ceolfridi* used three identical chronological systems when recording the establishment of Wearmouth and presented these in the same

order: (1) the year of the Incarnation of the Lord, 674, (2) the second indiction (3) and the fourth year of Ecgfrith.[43] Bede rarely used AD years with indictions, except in his works on computus, and the similarity between the dating clauses in both accounts suggests that both authors received their information from the same source, perhaps some form of foundation charter or early record for Wearmouth.[44]

It is worth recalling that Benedict Biscop and Wilfrid went to Rome together in the mid-650s, and both were committed supporters of Roman practises and traditions for the rest of their lives. Biscop went to Rome six times in total and escorted Theodore from Rome to Kent, at the pope's request, when Theodore was appointed archbishop of Canterbury; Benedict also later brought John the Archcantor from Rome to Britain; and Wearmouth, with its Petrine dedication, and later Jarrow with its dedication to Paul, was firmly Roman in outlook and practise.[45] It seems more than plausible that Wearmouth followed the Dionysian Easter from its inception and that this monastery became a bulwark of Roman practises in the north of England, as evidenced by Nechtan, the king of the Picts, writing to Abbot Ceolfrith for advice on the correct calculation of Easter in the early eighth century.[46] If there were a record from Wearmouth's foundation, it would not be surprising to find it dated by AD and the indiction. It is also worth remembering that the foundation date of Wearmouth in Bede's *Historia abbatum* is the earliest example of his use of AD years for chronology, rather than for computus as in *De temporibus*; surprisingly, the *Historia abbatum* tends to be overlooked in discussions of Bede and AD.[47]

There may have been a local reason, such as some form of written record, that inspired both Bede and the anonymous writer to use Dionysius's chronological apparatus when dating the monastery's establishment. This is worth considering in relation to the famous Jarrow foundation stone, which provides a different engagement with chronology. The dedication stone for the foundation of St Paul's Church is dated to the ninth day before the kalends of May, in the fifteenth regnal year of Ecgfrith and in the fourth abbatial year of Ceolfrith, the founder of the Church – that is, 23 April 685.[48] The regnal year of Ecgfrith is important for dating both the foundation of Wearmouth and St Paul's church at Jarrow. However, Wearmouth's AD and indiction are replaced with another local chronology at Jarrow, the abbatial years of Ceolfrith. As we have neither a sufficient number of dedication stones nor other types of foundation records from this period, it is difficult to say anything conclusive about the difference in dating forms, which may simply reflect the role of dedication stones compared to manuscript records. As the stone is on public display, an overt association with the reigning king and abbot may be important.[49]

The cumulative evidence from Anglo-Saxon England confirms that AD years were being disseminated by the Dionysian Easter tables prior to Bede's intervention, which allows us to contextualise his contribution within this wider tradition. Bede's unique application of this chronology was transformative, but prior to examining the extraordinary developments in the *Historia ecclesiastica*, we must first turn our attention to Francia and the activities of Bede's contemporary – the Anglo-Saxon pilgrim, Willibrord.

Willibrord and Francia

Willibrord connects many of the regions discussed in this book, as he first left his homeland to study in Ireland, before embarking on a mission to the continent.[50] Willibrord also underlines the link between the Dionysian Easter and the adoption of AD dating. He wrote a brief autobiographical note on a manuscript now known as Willibrord's calendar, which travelled with a 19-year paschal table for the years AD 684–702, the fourth cycle in Felix's extension of the Dionysian table.[51] The note in the margins of the month of November records that Willibrord went to Francia in *anno sexcentessimo nonagessimo ab incarnatione christi* ('in the year 690 from the incarnation of Christ'), he was ordained a bishop in *anno sexcentessimo nonagessimo quinto ab incarnatione domini* ('in the year 695 from the incarnation of the Lord'), and he was writing *annum septengentessimum uigessimum octauum ab incarnatione domini nostri iesu christi* ('in the year 728 from the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ'). In one short note he used three forms of the same dating clause, all inspired by Dionysius's description of his chronology and mirroring the variation we observed on contemporary Anglo-Saxon charters. That Willibrord's note is in a manuscript that also has a 19-year Dionysian table merely confirms the source of his chronological choice. In addition, Willibrord's commitment to the Dionysian reckoning is unquestioned as he was taught by Egbert who subsequently convinced the community on Iona to accept the Dionysian Easter in 716.[52]

The extent of Willibrord's impact on Francia is only beginning to be appreciated. Immo Warntjes regards him as the harbinger of the Carolingian renaissance, and James Palmer has recently argued that he is at the start of the tradition of Frankish annals.[53] The debate about the origin of annals and their relationship with Easter tables was outlined in Chapter Three; howsoever the early annals developed, it seems undeniable that the appearance of AD years is due to acceptance of the Dionysian reckoning and underlines a link with Easter tables.[54] As we saw in Chapter One, AD 703 became a base year for Frankish annals, most likely because this was the first year of a Dionysian 19-year cycle and the last 19-year cycle of Felix's extension to the Dionysian table. The Lorsch annals, for example, begin with 703.[55] The *Annales regni francorum* (Royal Frankish Annals; hereafter *ARF*) similarly use Incarnation years, though they were begun in 741 with the death of Charles Martel and their earliest entries are not regarded as contemporaneous.[56] Rosamond McKitterick has highlighted their careful ordering of time, especially in contrast to the Continuation of the *Chronicle of Fredegar*, or *Historia vel Gesta Francorum*, from the second half of the eighth century.[57] It seems clear that the adoption of AD years in Frankish annals developed independently of the dissemination of Bede's writings.[58]

The direct influence of Dionysius on the Frankish adoption of AD reckoning is also apparent in computistical texts from the first half of the eighth century. The prologue of a Dionysian Easter table from Aquitaine contains an incarnation dating clause for 721: *Porro numerus annorum Domini nostri Iesu Christi ab eius incarnatione continuata serie a septingentesimo vicesimo primo usque ad nongentesimum nonum decimum sua augmentatione proficiendo consurget*.[59]

AD 721 was the last year of Felix's extension to the Dionysian table, and the need for a new table suggests a clear context for this prologue's discussion of Easter reckonings. A more famous example of AD reckoning appears in a Frankish computus of 737, which preserves the earliest extant attack on non-Dionysian reckonings from this region. In actuality, this text offers a rare example of counting time from the Nativity: *A nativitate autem Domini usque ad praesentem annum, in quo Teudericus rex Francorum defunctus est, septingenti triginta septem* ('There is 737 years from the Nativity of the Lord until the present year in which Theuderic king of the Franks died').[60] This computus, in favour of the Dionysian Easter, is the first certain indicator of the Franks rejecting the Victorian reckoning, which they had consistently followed since its formal adoption in 541.[61] James Palmer has shown that the dispute between the Dionysian and Victorian reckonings became more pronounced in 740 and new Dionysian *computistica* were written in 743 leading to that reckoning's ultimate success.[62] The dating clause in the first of these texts, Cotton Caligula A XV, referred to the year *ab incarnatione domini nostri ihesu Christi*.[63] And the second, St Gall 225, counted the years *incarnaciones Christi* in the first instance and years *incarnationis* in the second.[64]

Once again, we see variation in the form of these dating clauses, even though all count from the beginning of Christ's life. The substitution of Nativity for Incarnation in the 'Computus of 737' most likely follows the common practise of treating these terms synonymously in the early medieval period. As we saw in Chapter Five, Bede did this in *De temporibus* before refining his terminology in the second half of his career. Some of these texts adopt Dionysius's clause in full and count from the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, while others adopt abbreviated forms. In his comprehensive study of *computistica* from Isidore to Bede, Immo Warntjes has shown that these developments in Frankish *computistica* occurred prior to the dissemination of Bede's *computi* and argues for the influence of Irish computus texts, especially the *Munich computus*, on these texts.[65] It is certainly clear that their dating clauses look directly to Dionysian Easter tables, which may have come via Ireland, but AD dates themselves are conspicuous by their absence in Irish sources from this period: *De ratione conputandi* is the only Irish computus textbook to mention AD reckoning and that is only in passing as one of the columns of the Dionysian table.[66] A figure such as Willibrord could have brought Irish computistical knowledge and the Anglo-Saxon practise of using Dionysian AD dating to the Franks at this early stage.

The weight of evidence reveals that AD years were becoming increasingly popular in the first half of the eighth century in both Britain and Francia, independently of Bede. However, in the examples we have looked at, all but Willibrord used AD for contemporary events, and Willibrord used it for recording events in his own lifetime. Bede's distinctive contribution was to apply Incarnation dating to history, and this was why his intervention was ultimately so significant. The development in Bede's practise can be seen when comparing his AD dates in the *Historia abbatum* and *De temporum ratione* with the *Historia ecclesiastica*. In the first two, Bede similarly used AD for contemporary and recent events, such as the death of Ceolfrith in 716 or the conversion of Iona to the Dionysian Easter also in 716; and in *De temporum ratione*, Bede also used older existing AD dates, such as the beginning of Dionysius's Easter tables in 532, which were taken from

the tables.[67] Bede significantly developed his practise in the *Historia ecclesiastica* by creating AD dates for events long in the past, and in doing so was the first to recognise the potential of AD as a historical chronology. There is nothing in either earlier or contemporary sources to compare with Bede's creation of a retrospective *Anno Domini* timeline for the history of the island of Britain from Julius Caesar's invasion in the first century BC to his own day. This is how he differed most markedly from his contemporaries and why he had such an impact. McKitterick has accurately observed that although Bede was not the primary impulse behind the Frankish adoption of Incarnation dating, he may have enhanced their understanding of the importance of the year of the Incarnation.[68] Bede's mental acuity in spotting the potential of AD was extraordinarily innovative, but remains almost entirely under-appreciated today, perhaps because using AD as a historical chronology is both obvious and natural for us; however, as we shall see, it was neither obvious nor natural to Bede's contemporaries.

Bede and Annus Domini *in the* Historia ecclesiastica

Bede's decision to use *Anno Domini* as the underlying chronological system of the *Historia ecclesiastica* was an extraordinary innovation; that it has provided us with a brilliantly useful and accessible timeline for early British history should not distract us from its innovative nature or contemporary significance. Bede's AD here differed from his predecessors who used linear chronologies, such as Prosper of Aquitaine's adoption of *Annus Passionis* dating in his chronicle because Prosper adapted one form of linear chronology from another: AP from years from Abraham which he also connected with consular years.[69] Bede, in contrast, had to invent an overarching frame for the collection of unrelated chronologies preserved in his sources, such as Roman imperial years, Anglo-Saxon regnal years and indictions to name but some. Better comparisons with Bede's *HE* are Gregory of Tours' *Decem Libri Historiarum* and the 'Fredegar compilation', in which there is no comparable chronological coherency.[70]

   Adherents of the Dionysian Easter tables who used AD years for contemporaneous purposes were practical innovators, but creating a retrospective chronology based on AD years was far more revolutionary. Scholars of the ancient world are more familiar with the difficulties inherent in synchronising chronologies with later eras, such as ours, and Denis Feeney has observed: 'The ease and apparent naturalness of our dating system conspire to beguile us into overlooking the fact that all of the dates it generates are themselves ultimately synchronisms'.[71] This is equally true for early British history as Bede's choice of chronology has similarly beguiled us. Indeed, analyses of the *HE*'s chronology either dissolve into circular arguments, as can be seen in attempts to determine the exact sequence of the conversion of Edwin of Northumbria because our dependence on Bede means we lack the independent evidence necessary to properly assess his conclusions[72] or resort to adding minor clarifications to Bede's chronology; for example, 'correcting' his date for the sack of Rome from 409 to 410, or the death of Gregory the Great from 605 to 604.[73] It is, of course, worth remembering that dating the sack of Rome to AD 410 is itself an act of anachronistic synchronism.

Bede's intentions and purposes in using AD years were vastly different to ours, though this is often overlooked in analyses of his AD chronology; similarly, Bede could not have imagined the impact transforming AD years into a historical chronology would have. I have argued throughout this book that Bede's chronological choices are inseparable from his theology and can be regarded as a theology of time. His adoption of Vulgate chronology in his world chronicles was inspired by exegesis of the scriptural text and his Incarnation dating reveals his Christology. In applying a chronology that counted from the Incarnation when relating the history of his own people, Bede deliberately and consciously underlined the Christian and universal character of his work. This is neither local nor 'national' history, for, in Bede's view, the conversion of the Anglo-Saxon peoples at the ends of the earth fulfilled the biblical work of providence as foretold in the Old Testament and confirmed in Christ's last words to the disciples at the end of Matthew's Gospel: *euntes ergo docete omnes gentes baptizantes eos in nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti* ('Going therefore, teach ye all nations: baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost': Matt 28:19).[74] The Incarnation was the fundamental moment in human salvation and this process would be completed when all peoples became members of the universal church, the Body of Christ. Bede's every AD date connected events on the island of Britain with those salvific events. Bede's extensive corpus allows us to contextualise his Incarnation dating in a way that is not possible for many of the examples of AD dating discussed earlier. We can only postulate what Incarnation dating meant to Willibrord, beyond its role in the Dionysian Easter reckoning. On the other hand, Bede's exegesis reveals the levels of meaning that the Incarnation had for him.[75]

Bede's adoption of a universal chronology in the *HE* also allowed him to move past a wide range of local and regional systems and present a coherent chronology for events in Britain from Julius Caesar to his own day. There were a wide range of different regnal years in this period, including Roman imperial years and various Anglo-Saxon royal lines, along with indiction and Roman consular years. A good example of these practises can be found in the opening of the Synod of Hatfield's council book:

> *In nomine Domini nostri Iesu Christi Saluatoris. Imperantibus dominis piissimis nostris Ecgfrido rege Humbronensium, anno decimo regni eius sub die XV kalendas Octobres indictione octaua, et Aedilredo rege Mercinensium, anno sexto regni eius, et Alduulfo rege Estranglorum, anno septimodecimo regni eius, et Hlothario rege Cantuariorum, regni eius anno septimo.*
>
> In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour, and in the reign of our most religious lords, namely Ecgfrith, king of the Northumbrians, in the tenth year of his reign – 17 September and the eighth indiction – in the sixth year of the reign of Æthelred, king of the Mercians: in the seventeenth year of the reign of Ealdwulf, king of the East Angles; and in the seventh year of the reign of Hlothhere, king of Kent.[76]

The reader is here presented with five different chronological systems, the regnal years of four Anglo-Saxon kings and the indiction. Bede did not synchronise with

AD in the main text but dated it to 680 in the final chapter's recapitulation.[77] This is one of the cases where we can infer that Bede's chronological synchronism is inaccurate. Hatfield was held as part of the Western Church's preparation for the sixth ecumenical council at Constantinople in 680–1, and in order for the findings to have been communicated to Rome in time, it was most likely held in September 679, not 680.[78] Bede's slip has been linked to his formula for calculating AD from the indiction, following the Dionysian *argumenta*, which provides the Julian year for the majority of the indiction year, but as the indiction year begins in September, the first four months belong to the previous Julian year. As Hatfield, and the earlier Synod of Hertford, were held in September it seems plausible that they have both been misdated by a year.[79] This also underlines the difficulties Bede faced in synchronising such a complicated range of chronologies, which begin at different points in the year. However, in consistently using AD throughout the book, and reinforcing it with the chronological synopsis of *HE* 5:24 in which all events are dated by AD, Bede presented an unlikely unity in his account of Anglo-Saxon history.

There are 47 explicit AD years in the main narrative, that is, *HE* 1–5:23, and 50 AD entries in the chronological recapitulation in *HE* 5:24.[80] This count includes Caesar's invasion because it is dated anterior to the Incarnation: *anno ab Urbe condita sescentesimo nonagesimo tertio, ante uero incarnationis Dominicae tempus anno sexagesimo* ('in the 693rd year from the foundation of the City [Rome], moreover, in the sixtieth year before the time of the incarnation of the Lord').[81] Thirty-one events are dated by AD years in both the main narrative and the chronological synopsis.[82] Bede recorded the year as the Incarnation of the Lord on every occasion, as we have seen. However, modern English translations frequently mistranslate Bede's Incarnation dating clauses; for example, the standard critical edition of Colgrave and Mynors anachronistically updates Bede's chronological form to the 'year of our Lord' in almost every instance, and this is repeated in the Oxford World's Classics edition of the text. This format is also most often used in the Penguin Classics edition, though, occasionally, Bede's clauses are translated as the Incarnation of the Lord, the Nativity of the Lord and sometimes in the year, despite the consistency of the Latin text.[83] AD is used for a range of events, including accessions, baptisms, consecrations, abdications, deaths, battles and church councils, along with astronomical phenomena and important events on Iona, but not every major event is given an AD date.[84] Several entries, such as the Synod of Hatfield, are dated precisely from the Incarnation in 5:24 but dated in relation to other events in the main text. In this regard Bede's practise in the *HE* may reflect his practise in the 'Chronicle of 725'. In the chronicle the death of an emperor is usually given an AM date and all events during his reign are included in that notice; in the *HE*, Bede frequently dated the first year of an imperial or Anglo-Saxon reign using AD, and subsequent events from that reign are included in the same chapter.[85] Bede may have wished to highlight the significance of certain events by singling them out with their own Incarnation year in the recapitulation; for example, the contact between Pope Eleutherius and Lucius of Britain.[86]

In creating a new chronological framework, Bede differed from the standard medieval practise of replicating the chronological data in his sources.[87] His

capacity for chronological innovation was well established by the time he wrote the *HE*, as his adoption of Vulgate chronology in his world chronicles reveals his facility with chronological calculations. Indeed, the argument that Bede took his Vulgate chronology from an unknown source is somewhat undermined by the fact that re-calculating AM years within the world chronicle tradition was far easier than inventing an *Anno Domini* timeline for early British history. We can see Bede's process of chronological synchronism develop when we compare AD years in the *HE* with the equivalent AM years in his chronicles. The table in Appendix 6 compares Bede's AD years for Roman emperors from the *HE* with AD years calculated from his AM dates from both chronicles. The variation between his sources is apparent here and it is striking that the nearer Bede gets to his own time the more accurate his AD dates in the *HE* become; in contrast, the opposite occurs when converting his AM years to AD. This is because when calculating AD years in the *HE* Bede almost certainly used Dionysian tables that contained AD and the indiction cycle in parallel columns; as many of his sources contained indiction dates (for example, the papal letters) these would have been relatively easy calculations, especially for events after the start date of Dionysius's table in 532.[88] The biggest discrepancies between Bede's AD and modern calculations occur in the first and second centuries. It is far more difficult to synchronise imperial years with a linear chronology, whether AM or AD, as Mosshammer has shown by explaining that the fifteenth year of Tiberius could equate with any 12-month period from October AD 27 to December AD 29.[89] We have seen that as Bede's imperial chronology moves forward in time minor errors accumulate and the discrepancies between his chronicles grow.[90]

Bede's literate contemporaries would have been familiar with linear chronologies, both *Anno Mundi* and *Anno Domini*, but the initial reaction to AD as a historical chronology is inconclusive. The earliest extant manuscript of Bede's *HE* is now generally believed to be the 'Moore Bede', written at Wearmouth-Jarrow within a few years of his death and possibly as early as 737.[91] There are three additions immediately after the conclusion of the main text and written by the main text scribe, two of which concern us. The first is on the same folio (128r) as the conclusion of Bede's work and includes notices for the years 731, 732, 733 and 734, known as the 'Moore Annals'.[92] These are clearly AD years, and the entries follow the format of Bede's chronological recapitulation in *HE* 5:24; however, despite their laconic nature, they offer important information about political instability in Northumbria around the time Bede was writing, including the deposition, tonsuring and restoration of King Ceolwulf, the dedicatee of the *HE*.[93]

The other addition, known as the *Moore Memorandum*, begins on line five of the next folio (128v) and includes a Northumbrian king list from Ida to Ceolwulf, followed by a very brief record of nine historical events.[94] The *Memorandum* opens with *Anno dxluii* (In the year 547) and the reign of King Ida of the Northumbrians, which lasted for 12 years. This is followed by 16 kings in sequence, first Ida's successors in the kingdom of Bernicia and then the kingdom of Northumbria and includes the regnal years for each. This list is the only surviving evidence for the regnal years of the seven kings who preceded Æthelfrith.[95] We know that Bede worked from similar

regnal lists when compiling the *HE*, as he noted that those who computed the lists of kings abolished the memory of the apostate rulers of Deira and Bernicia between Edwin and Oswald by adding their year to Oswald's reign, making this nine years.[96] The list in the *Moore Memorandum* observes this practise as Oswald immediately follows Edwin, even though Eanfrid was the king of Bernicia in between, and, to fully conform with Bede's account, Oswald's reign is given as nine years.[97]

The second part of the *Moore Memorandum* begins after the notice for Ceol-wulf's reign with the baptism of Paulinus, 111 years ago. The following eight events are also all dated from the author's *annus praesens*, and has led to the list being dated to 737.[98] It is striking that the scribe, who has just finished copying Bede's *HE*, which used AD dating, opted for an entirely different way of meas-uring time here; indeed, this is almost the opposite of Bede's AD years, which count time forward from a significant event in the past, while this method counts backward from the present. Its limitations as a historical chronology are obvious. As Peter Hunter Blair pointed out, any document using this system was only valid for the year in which it was written.[99] A similar practise is evident in the margins of the *Recapitulatio* in the 'St Petersburg Bede', where small Roman numerals are written in the same hand as the text alongside the AD years.[100] These examples indicate that Bede's contemporaries may have struggled with AD as a historical chronology and reveal the unusual nature of his endeavour.[101] They also suggest that the influence of Bede's *HE* on early medieval chronology was gradual and occurred in tandem with contemporary developments in Francia and elsewhere.

The process by which AD years came to dominate the Western world is beyond the scope of this book. My concern was to contextualise Bede's engagement with this chronology; assessing his impact on the development of Incarnation dating in the early Middle Ages and after would require a full-length study of its own. Bede was one amongst many to adopt the chronological apparatus of the Diony-sian Easter table in the late seventh and early eighth centuries. However, he dif-fered from his contemporaries by transforming AD into a historical chronology in keeping with his theology of time. He counted time from the Incarnation of the Lord (*ab incarnatione Domini*) because he wanted to remind his readers that the promise of salvation revealed at the Incarnation was fulfilled in the conversion of his own people at the ends of the earth. In the *HE*, his chronological apparatus is a concise and meaningful creedal statement underlining that his work is, first and foremost, *Historia ecclesiastica gentis anglorum*.

Notes

1　See Chapter One for Bede's place in the computistical tradition, and the early eighth-century context for his defence of Dionysius. On Whitby, see Holford-Strevens, 'Marital discord in Northumbria,' pp. 143–58; and Dailey, 'To choose one Easter from three,' pp. 47–64.

2　On the development of AD dating and Dionysius's role, see Mosshammer, *Easter Computus*; Holford-Strevens, *The History of Time*; Declercq, *Anno Domini*; and *idem*., 'Dionysius Exiguus and the introduction of the Christian era,' *Sacris Erudiri* 41 (2002) pp. 165–246.

3 Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 1.21, ed. C. Mondésert and M. Caster, *Les Stromates: Stromate I, SC* 30 (Paris 1951). Several of the earliest efforts to date the birth of Christ correspond to between 2 and 4 BC; see Mosshammer, *Easter Computus*, pp. 325–34.

4 Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 1.5, ed. G. Bardy, *Eusèbe de Césarée, Histoire Ecclésiastique, SC 31* (Paris 1952) p. 21; and *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 7.32, ed. G. Bardy, *Eusèbe de Césarée, Histoire Ecclésiastique, SC 41* (Paris 1955) p. 230. See Chapter Five for discussion of Eusebius's announcement of Christ's birth and his influence on Bede in *De temporum ratione*, c. 66, *s.a.* 3952. See also D.P. Mc Carthy, 'The Emergence of *Anno Domini*,' in G. Jaritz and G. Moreno-Riaño (eds.), *Time and Eternity: The Medieval Discourse* (Turnhout 2003) pp. 31–53.

5 See, e.g., Nothaft, *Dating the Passion*, p. 88. See also Mosshammer on various dates for Christ's life, *Easter Computus*, pp. 325ff. He has argued that Eusebius dated Christ's birth to about 3 BC: *Easter Computus*, p. 330.

6 See D.M. Deliyannis, 'Year dates in the early middle ages,' in C. Humphrey and W.M. Ormrod (eds.), *Time in the Medieval World* (Woodbridge 2001) pp. 5–22.

7 Mosshammer, *Easter Computus*, p. 31. The distinction between Incarnation and Nativity was explained in Chapter Five and its significance for chronology will be outlined.

8 See Chapter Three, which elaborates on these developments.

9 Prosper of Aquitaine, *Epitoma Chronicon*, ed. T. Mommsen, *MGH Auctores antiquissimi*, 9, *Chronica Minora*, 1 (Munich 1981) pp. 385–485.

10 *Prologus Victorius*, c. 9, ed. Krusch, *Studien* II, pp. 17–26 at 24.

11 Cologne 83-II, 76v – 79r contains a Dionysian Easter table with AM years, and the Spanish era. I am grateful to Immo Warntjes for bringing this manuscript to my attention. See my discussion of prospective chronological systems and Easter tables in MacCarron, 'Christology and the future,' pp. 161–79 at 162–67. Victorius's list of consuls had to be managed carefully in the second running of his table; however, the table's luni-solar data was completely cyclical and the AP chronology could continue indefinitely into the future.

12 See Blackburn and Holford-Strevens, *The Oxford Companion to the Year*, p. 778.

13 Dionysius Exiguus, *Epistola ad Petronium*, ed. B. Krusch, *Studien* II, pp. 63–68 at 64, lines 12–14. See further in Chapter Five, and MacCarron, 'Christology and the future,' p. 168.

14 Dionysius Exiguus, *Epistola ad Petronium*, ed. Krusch, *Studien* II, p. 64, lines 8–12.

15 For a comprehensive assessment of chronology and calendars in Greek and Roman tradition, see Samuel, *Greek and Roman Chronology*. See also E.J. Bickerman, *Chronology of the Ancient World* (Ithaca, NY 1950); S. Stern, *Calendars in Antiquity: Empires, State and Societies* (Oxford 2012).

16 Mosshammer, *Easter Computus*, pp. 173–74.

17 Mosshammer, *Easter Computus*, pp. 26–27 and 334.

18 See M. Sartre, *Bostra: des origins à l'Islam* (Paris 1985) p. 64; M. Sartre, *Inscriptions Grecques et Latines de la Syrie*, Vol. XIII, Fascicule 1, Bostra (Paris 1982); A.F.L. Beeston, 'Nemara and Faw,' *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 42.1 (1979) pp. 1–6 at 5–6; J. Conant, *Staying Roman: Conquest and Identity in Africa and the Mediterranean, 439–700* (Cambridge 2012) pp. 151–58. I am grateful to Andrew Marsham and Harry Mawdsley for discussion of these chronologies.

19 See O. Neugebauer, 'On the "Spanish Era",' *Chiron* 11 (1981) pp. 371–80; and Blackburn and Holford-Strevens, *The Oxford Companion to the Year*, p. 767. Immo Warntjes has discovered examples of this reckoning in seventh-century (Isidorian) Easter tables, proving their Spanish origin, and which provide evidence for the transmission of Alexandrian Easter tables to the West independent of Dionysius Exiguus. These Spanish Easter tables use neither the era of Diocletian nor *Annus Domini* years,

and the Spanish era appears in marginal notes: 'The Continuation of the Alexandrian Easter table in seventh-century Iberia and its transmission to ninth-century Francia (Isidore, *Etymologiae* 6.17),' *Revue d'Histoire Des Textes* 13 (2018) pp. 185–94 at 190–93.

20 See Handley, *Death, Society and Culture* for discussion of the range of chronologies recorded on inscriptions.

21 Dionysius, *Epistola ad Petronium*, ed. Krusch, *Studien* II, p. 64, lines 10–14: *noluimus circulis nostris memoriam impii et perseutoris innectere, sed magis elegimus ab incarnatione domini nostri Iesu Christi annorum tempora praenotare; quatinus exordium spei nostrae notius nobis existeret et causa reparationis humanae, id est, passio redemptoris nostri, evidentius eluceret.*

22 See Mosshammer, *Easter Computus*, p. 340; and further in Chapter Five.

23 Victor of Tonnena, *Chronicon*, line 996, ed. C.C. de Hartmann, *CCSL* 173A (Turnhout 2001) p. 55. Mosshammer, *Easter Computus*, p. 31. See Chapter Three for Victor of Tonnena's chronicle.

24 Cassiodorus, *Institutiones*, ed. R.A.B. Mynors (Oxford 1937) book 1.23. See Mosshammer, *Easter Computus*, p. 7.

25 On Vivarium and Dionysius, see Cuppo, 'Felix of Squillace and the Dionysiac Computus I,' pp. 110–36. On the Dionysian *argumenta*, see I. Warntjes, 'The *Argumenta* of Dionysius Exiguus and their early recensions,' pp. 40–111. On the *Computus Paschalis*, see Mosshammer, *Easter Computus*, p. 7, and O. Neugebauer, 'On the *Computus Paschalis* of "Cassiodorus",' *Centaurus* 25.3 (1981) pp. 292–302.

26 See Krusch, *Studien* II, pp. 86–87.

27 Masako Ohashi has shown that elements of the Victorian reckoning survived into the early eighth century: 'The Easter table of victorius of Aquitaine,' pp. 137–49.

28 *Epitaphium Beati Bedani Presbyteri*, ed. and tr. M. Lapidge, 'The earliest Anglo-Latin poet: Lutting of Lindisfarne,' *Anglo-Saxon England* 42 (2013) pp. 1–26 at 21–22. On the possible identity and origin of Lutting, and his master, Bede, see Lapidge, 'The earliest Anglo-Latin poet'; and C. Ireland, 'Lutting of Lindisfarne and the earliest recorded use of Dionysiac *annus Domini* chronology in Northumbria,' *Peritia* (forthcoming). I am grateful to Colin Ireland for sending me a copy of his essay prior to publication.

29 Cf. Bede, *De temporibus* 16, lines 16–18, ed. Jones, p. 601; and see Chapter Five.

30 London, BL Cotton Augustus ii.3: S89, *Electronic Sawyer*, www.esawyer.org.uk/charter/89.html. See C. Breay and J. Story (eds.), *Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms: Art, Word, War*, No. 38 (London 2018) p. 137 for full colour reproduction; and D. Whitelock (ed.), *English Historical Documents, I, c. 500–1042*, no. 67 (London 1979) pp. 492–94.

31 See, most recently, Simon Keynes in Breay and Story, *Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms*, p. 136.

32 On the development of Anglo-Saxon charters, see P. Chaplais, 'The origin and authenticity of the Royal Anglo-Saxon Diploma,' *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 3 (1965) pp. 48–61.

33 S51; S52. For all the following charters, see www.esawyer.org.uk/browse/sawyercat.html. See K. Harrison, 'The *Annus Domini* in some early charters,' *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 4.7 (1973) pp. 551–57; Harrison, *The Framework of Anglo-Saxon History*, pp. 65–75; P. Sims-Williams, 'St Wilfrid and two charters dated AD 676 and 680,' *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 39.2 (1988) pp. 163–83.

34 See S2; S3; and S6.

35 S7 to S23. For incarnation dates, see S10; S19; and S22.

36 See S67; S68; S70; S71; S73; S75; S78; S82; S83; and S84.

37 I hope to examine charters and their dating clauses in greater detail in a subsequent publication.

38 Dionysius, *Epistola ad Petronium*, ed. Krusch, *Studien* II, p. 64, lines 11–12. See Chapter Five for discussion.

39 Bede, *DTR* 47, line 8, ed. Jones, *CCSL* 123B, p. 427. See Chapter Five for discussion of Bede's *Anno Domini* dating forms. See Krusch, *Studien* II, pp. 86–87 for Felix's prologue.

40 K. Harrison, 'The Synod of Whitby and the beginning of the Christian Era in England,' *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* 45 (1973) 108–14.

41 Sims-Williams, 'St Wilfrid and two charters'.

42 Stephen, *Life of Wilfrid*, 41, ed. and tr. B. Colgrave (Cambridge 1927) pp. 80–84 for Selsey; Wilfrid is linked with kings of Mercia throughout the book, in c. 45 he fled from Northumbria and went to his faithful friend, Æthelred of Mercia (*ad amicum fidelem*), p. 92. Cf. Bede, *HE* 4:13 and 5:19.

43 Bede, *Historia abbatum*, c. 4, ed. and tr. Grocock and Wood, *Abbots of Wearmouth and Jarrow*, p. 32; and *Vita Ceolfridi*, c. 7, ed. and tr. Grocock and Wood, *Abbots of Wearmouth and Jarrow*, pp. 84–86. See further in Chapter Five.

44 Peter Hunter Blair has intriguingly suggested that the foundation of Wearmouth could be dated to 673 based on his examination of the *Moore Memorandum*. This implies the AD date for the monastery's foundation was calculated by Bede, as Hunter Blair's argument is based on Levison's hypothesis regarding Bede's synchronising of AD and regnal years. However, Bede may not be the only person who struggled with the chronological implications of the indiction year beginning in September rather than January. These points will be examined further below. See P. Hunter Blair, 'The *Moore Memoranda* on Northumbrian history,' in C. Fox and B. Dickins (eds.), *The Early Cultures of North-West Europe* (Cambridge 1950) pp. 245–57; W. Levison, *England and the Continent in the Eighth Century* (Oxford 1946, repr. 1998) pp. 265–67.

45 *Historia abbatum*, 2–7; and *Vita Wilfridi*, 3, ed. Colgrave, p. 8. See Chapter Five for discussion of other similarities between the devotional practises of Wearmouth-Jarrow and Wilfrid's foundations.

46 The letter is included in full in *HE* 5:21. There is a school of thought that Ceolfrith's letter was by Bede, e.g., J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People: A Historical Commentary* (Oxford 1988) p. 196; I see no reason to doubt the attribution to Ceolfrith, see Ohashi, 'Theory and history,' pp. 177–85 at 184–85; and *eadem*., 'The impact of the Paschal Controversy,' pp. 79–96.

47 See, e.g., Harrison, 'The *Annus Domini* in some early charters' and *The Framework of Anglo-Saxon History*; and Sims-Williams, 'St Wilfrid and two charters,' who refer only to *De temporum ratione* and the *Historia ecclesiastica* in their discussions of Bede and AD.

48 *DEDICATIO BASILICAE S(AN)C(T)I PAVLI VIIII K(A)L(ENDAS) MAI(AS) ANNO XV ECFRIDI REG(IS); CEOLFRIDI ABB(ATIS), EIVSDEMQ(UE) ECCLES(IAE) D(E)O AUCTORE CONDITORIS, ANNO IIII*. See J. Higgitt, 'The dedication inscription at Jarrow and its context,' *The Antiquaries Journal* 59 (1979) pp. 343–74. E. Okasha, 'Jarrow I,' in *Hand-list of Anglo-Saxon non-runic inscriptions* (Cambridge 1971) pp. 85–86.

49 These differences could also betray something of the early origins of Jarrow, which may have been intended as a separate and royal foundation; see I. Wood, 'The origins of Jarrow: The monastery, the slake and Ecgfrith's minster,' *Bede's World Studies* 1 (Jarrow 2008) pp. 3–18; and Grocock and Wood, 'Introduction,' *Abbots of Wearmouth and Jarrow*, pp. XXV–XXXII.

50 See Bede, *HE* 3:13 and 5:10–11 for Willibrord. On connections and networks in this period, see Story, 'Bede, Willibrord and the Letters of Pope Honorius I,' pp. 783–818.

51 See H.A. Wilson (ed.), *The Calendar of St Willibrord. From MS Paris Lat. 10837: Facsimile with transcription, introduction and notes* (1918), and available online at: https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b6001113z/f90.double.r=ms%20lat. The

calendar is at ff. 34v – 40r and the Easter table at fol. 40v. Wilson noted that the table and calendar are in the same hand, p. ix. See also Warntjes, *Munich Computus*, p. XCI. Dáibhí Ó Cróinín has cogently argued that Willibrord brought this table from Ireland, specifically the monastery of Rath Melsigi: 'Rath Melsigi, Willibrord, and the earliest Echternach manuscripts,' *Peritia* 3 (1984) pp. 17–49, repr. in Ó Cróinín, *Early Irish History and Chronology*, pp. 145–65 at 155–61. On authorship of the note, see David Howlett, 'Willibrord's autobiographical note and the 'Versus Sybillae de iudicio Dei,' *Peritia* 20 (2008) pp. 154–64. For Felix's extension to the Dionysian table, see Introduction and Chapter One.

52 Ó Cróinín, 'Rath Melsigi,' and see Bede, *HE* 5:9–10 and 22. For the possible preparation of computistical materials in Rath Melsigi for Willibrord's mission, see I. Warntjes, 'The *Computus Cottonianus* of AD 689: A computistical formulary written for Willibrord's Frisian Mission,' in Warntjes and Ó Cróinín, *The Easter Controversy*, pp. 173–212.

53 See Immo Warntjes, 'Computus as scientific thought in Ireland and the early Medieval West,' in R. Flechner and S. Meeder (eds.), *The Irish in Early Medieval Europe: Identity, Culture and Religion* (London 2016) pp. 158–78, esp. 166–69. James Palmer, 'The adoption of the Dionysian Easter in the Frankish Kingdoms (*c*. 670 – *c*. 0800),' *Peritia* 28 (2017) pp. 135–54 at 149–53. See also Friedrich Kurze, 'Die karolingischen Annalen des achten Jahrhunderts,' *Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde* 25 (1900) pp. 293–315.

54 See Story, 'The Frankish Annals,' pp. 59–109.

55 See Palmer, 'The Adoption of the Dionysian Easter,' pp. 149–52; and McKitterick, *History and Memory*, pp. 106–9 for the Lorsch annals. Whether the Lorsch annals reflect contemporary recording or were compiled later, the start-date of 703 is significant for the link between AD years and the Dionysian Easter.

56 *Annales Regni Francorum*, ed. G. Pertz, *MGH Scriptores* (Hannover 1895). See R. McKitterick, 'Constructing the past in the early middle ages: The case of the Royal Frankish Annals,' *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Sixth Series, 7 (1997) pp. 101–29 at 116.

57 McKitterick, 'Constructing the Past,' p. 114; and on the *ARF* more broadly, pp. 110–29. For the 'Fredegar chronicle,' see Collins, *Die Fredegar-Chroniken*, and Chapter Three.

58 On the dissemination of Bede's works, see Westgard, 'Bede and the continent,' pp. 201–15, esp. 203–10; and James Palmer, 'The ends and futures,' pp. 139–60. McKitterick has argued that Bede's work was little known before the ninth century: *History and Memory in the Carolingian World* (Cambridge 2004) pp. 93–95.

59 *Prol. Aquit*. 3C, ed. A. Borst, *Schriften zur Komputistik im Frankenreich von 721 bis 818*, I, *MGH Quellen Zur Geistesgeschichte Des Mittelalters* 21 (Hannover 2006), pp. 337–47.

60 *Dial. Neustr*. ed. Borst, *Schriften zur Komputistik*, I, pp. 381–423; see 30C, p. 421 for the dating clause. On the many different names for this text, see Warntjes, *Munich Computus*, p. XXV.

61 The earliest objections to the Victorian Easter in Francia are found in the letters of Columbanus from c. 600; see, e.g., *Ep*. 1 to Gregory the Great, ed. G.S.M. Walker, *Sancti Columbani Opera* (Dublin 1957, repr. 1997) pp. 3–13.

62 James Palmer, 'Computus after the Paschal Controversy of AD 740,' pp. 213–31.

63 See Palmer, 'Computus after the Paschal Controversy of AD 740,' pp. 218–19, for image of the dating clause from the manuscript, text and translation.

64 See Palmer, 'Computus after the Paschal Controversy of AD 740,' pp. 230–32, for image of the first dating clause from the manuscript and text and translation of both.

65 See Warntjes, *Munich Computus*, pp. CII–CVI and CLXVIII–CXCI. See also Palmer, 'The Adoption of the Dionysian Easter,' pp. 147–48.

66 *De ratione conputandi* 103, ed. D. Ó Cróinín (Toronto 1988) p. 207.

67 *Historia abbatum*, 23, ed. Grocock and Wood, pp. 72–73: note that Bede's dating clause is *anno ab incarnatione Domini septingentesimo sextodecimo*, which is inaccurately translated as '716 years after the Lord's birth'; this may seem an overly technical point, but the difference between incarnation and birth was significant for Bede as discussed in Chapter Five. See *De temporum ratione*, 66, *s.a.* 4670, ed. Jones, p. 533, for Iona; *De temporum ratione*, 66, *s.a.* 4518, ed. Jones, p. 521, for Dionysius. Bede synchronised Dionysius's AD year with the year of Diocletian, an era which Dionysius had rendered obsolete.

68 McKitterick, *History and Memory*, p. 92. She has also pointed out that AD years become far more common on the continent in the ninth century, by which time Bede's works were becoming well known: McKitterick, 'Constructing the Past,' 101–29; and *eadem.*, *History and Memory*, pp. 88, 93.

69 Prosper, *Epitoma Chronicon*, ed. Mommsen.

70 Gregory of Tours, *Historiarum libri X*, ed. B. Krusch, *MGH Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum, 1.1* (Hannover 1937) pp. 31–537. *Chronicarum quae dicuntur Fredegarii scholastic Libri IV*, ed. B. Krusch, *MGH Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum*, 2 (Hannover 1888) pp. 18–168. See Chapter Three for 'Fredegar compilation' and A.C. Murray, 'Chronology and the composition of the *Histories* of Gregory of Tours,' *Journal of Late Antiquity* 1.1 (2008) pp. 157–96.

71 Feeney, *Caesar's Calendar*, p. 12.

72 See D.P. Kirby, 'Bede and Northumbrian Chronology,' *EHR* 78 (1963) pp. 514–27; P. Hunter Blair, 'The Letters of Pope Boniface V and the mission of Paulinus to Northumbria,' in P. Clemoes and K. Hughes, ed., *England Before the Conquest* (Cambridge 1971) pp. 5–13; S. Wood, 'Bede's Northumbrian Dates Again,' *EHR* 98 (1983) pp. 280–96.

73 See, most recently, Shaw, *The Gregorian Mission to Kent in Bede's* Ecclesiastical History, pp. 24–28. An exception is Patrick Sims-Williams's incisive analysis of Bede's dates for the *adventus Saxonum*, though he concludes his discussion by suggesting we 'leave chronology now in despair': 'The settlement of England in Bede and the *Chronicle*,' *Anglo-Saxon England* 12 (1983) 1–41 at 15–21 (quotation on p. 21).

74 The providential nature of the conversion of those at the ends of the earth is a feature of writings from Britain and Ireland, beginning with Patrick's account of his mission in the *Confessio*, recurs in Columbanus' writings, was repeated in Pope Vitalian's letter to Oswiu and is most comprehensively treated in Bede's *HE*. See Patrick, *Confessio* 1, 11 and 38, https://confessio.ie/#; Columbanus, *Ep.* 5, ed. Walker; Vitalian in Bede, *HE* 3:29, and throughout Bede's work. Jennifer O'Reilly was the finest exponent of the use of these concepts in the Insular World; see, e.g., 'Islands and idols at the ends of the earth,'; 'The multitude of Isles and the corner-stone,'; and 'Introduction' to *Bede: On the Temple*, all reprinted in O'Reilly, *History, Hagiography and Biblical Exegesis*: *Essays on Bede, Adomnán and Thomas Becket*, ed. M. MacCarron and D. Scully (Oxford and New York 2019).

75 See Chapter Five.

76 *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People* [*HE*], bk 4, c. 17, ed. and tr. B. Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors (Oxford 1969) pp. 384–85.

77 *HE* 4:17, pp. 384–85; *HE* 5:24, p. 564. For the chronological systems of papal letters, see the examples in *HE* 1:23–4, 1:28–30, 1:32 and 2:18. The letter of Pope Honorius to Archbishop Honorius in *HE* 2:18 is the only epistolary dating clause to which Bede added an AD year.

78 Bede's awareness of Hatfield's broader significance is apparent in his description of the sixth ecumenical council in the 'Chronicle of 725,' *De temporum ratione*, 66, *s.a.* 4639, ed. Mommsen in Jones, pp. 527–28.

79 See Harrison, *The Framework of Anglo-Saxon History*, pp. 41 and 83–85, who also considers the complications of synchronising regnal years with our era. The Synod of Hertford's proceedings date it to 24 September and the first indiction, and Bede added

that it took place in 673: *HE* 4.5, pp. 348–52 and *HE* 5:24, p. 564. Hertford cannot be dated by any other means but as both councils took place in September, and they are seven years apart, it follows that if Bede has misdated one he has misdated both, i.e., if Hatfield took place in 679, Hertford was 672. Cf. Levison, *England and the Continent*, pp. 265–66. See Chapter One for discussion of the Dionysian *argumenta*.

80 See Appendix 5, 'Incarnation dating clauses in the *Historia ecclesiatica*'.

81 Bede, *HE* 1:2, p. 20; translation mine. Bede's *AUC* date comes from Orosius, *Historiarum adversum paganos libri VII*, 6.7 ed. C. Zangemeister (Leipzig 1889) pp. 369–73. Caesar's invasions are usually dated to 55 and 54 BC. On the significance of the Roman invasions for the history of Britain, see D. Scully, '"Proud Ocean has become a servant": A classical topos in the literature of Britain's conquest and conversion,' in E. Mullins and D. Scully (eds.), *'Listen, O Isles, Unto Me': Studies in Medieval Word and Image in Honour of Jennifer O'Reilly* (Cork 2011) pp. 3–15.

82 See Appendix 5, 'Incarnation dating clauses in the *Historia ecclesiastica*'. See Chapter Five for discussion of the form of dating clauses used by Bede. This table and these calculations are based on modern printed editions of the *HE* in which the chronicle ends in 731. Most manuscripts of the *c-type* also contain annals for 733 and 734. See R.A.B. Mynors, 'Textual Introduction,' in *Bede: Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (Oxford 1969, repr. 2001) pp. XXXIX–LXXIV; and J. Story, 'After Bede: Continuing the *Ecclesiastical History*,' in S. Baxter, C.E. Karkov, J.L. Nelson and D. Pelteret (eds.), *Early Medieval Studies in Memory of Patrick Wormald* (Farnham 2009) pp. 165–84 at 166–68.

83 See Appendix 5, 'Incarnation dating clauses in the *Historia ecclesiastica*,' for the Latin form of each example. Translations of Bede's *HE* are Colgrave and Mynors' edition reprinted in Oxford World's Classics, ed. Judith McClure and Roger Collins (Oxford 1999, repr. 2008), and Leo Sherley-Price in Penguin Classics (London 1955, repr. 1965, 1968, 1990).

84 See further, MacCarron, 'Christology and the future,' pp. 172–73.

85 This does not always apply. For example, in relation to the history of Northumbria from the death of Edwin to the Synod of Whitby in *HE* 3, which I examined in 'Christology and the Future in Bede's *Annus Domini*,' pp. 173–78. If there is a further pattern in Bede's selection of when and where to use AD, I am unable to detect it.

86 *HE* 1:4, where this is dated to the reign of Marcus Antoninus Verus but dated AD without any reference to the emperor in *HE* 5:24.

87 See Deliyannis, 'Year dates in the early middle ages,' pp. 16–21; M. MacCarron, 'Bede, *Annus Domini* and the *Historia ecclesiastica gentis anglorum*,' pp. 116–34 at 117–19.

88 Complications arose for events that occurred in September to December as the indiction cycle began in September, while the Julian year, then as now, began in January, as discussed earlier.

89 Mosshammer, *Easter Computus*, p. 18; see Chapter Five.

90 See Chapter Four for further discussion and Appendix 3, 'Chronological comparison of Bede's chronicles'.

91 Cambridge University Library MS Kk.5.16: https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-KK-00005-00016/264. P. Hunter Blair and R.A.B. Mynors (eds.), *The Moore Bede: Cambridge University Library MS.Kk.5.16*, Early English Manuscripts in facsimile, 9 (Copenhagen 1959). On the early transmission of the *HE*, see the reassessment by Lapidge, 'Beda Venerabilis,' pp. 44–135 at 78–112; and Story, 'After Bede,' pp. 165–67.

92 'Moore Annals,' in Colgrave and Mynors, p. 572. See Story, 'After Bede,' pp. 168–74 for discussion of the 'Moore Annals,' and pp. 183–84 for an edition and translation.

93 There is little overt reference to political instability in the *HE* itself, but Bede's awareness of his contemporary circumstances is apparent in his letter to Bishop Egbert from 734: *Epistola Bede ad Ecgbertum Episcopum*, ed. C. Plummer in *Baedae Opera*

Historica (Oxford 1896, repr. 1946) pp. 405–23. On potential political backdrops to the *Historia ecclesiastica*, see Kirby, 'King Ceolwulf of Northumbria,' pp. 168–73; *idem.*, *Bede's Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*, Jarrow Lecture 1992, repr. in *Bede and His World, Vol. II, The Jarrow Lectures 1979–1993* (Aldershot 1994) pp. 903–26; W. Goffart, 'Bede and the Ghost of Bishop Wilfrid,' pp. 235–328; and *idem.*, 'Bede's history in a harsher climate,' in S. DeGregorio (ed.), *Innovation and Tradition in the Writings of The Venerable Bede* (Morgantown 2006) pp. 203–26. On Bede and kingship see, most recently, C. O'Brien, 'Kings and Kingship in the Writings of Bede,' *EHR* 132.559 (2017) pp. 1473–98.

94   See Blair, 'The *Moore Memoranda*,' p. 246 for full text and Plate XI for image.

95   Blair, 'The *Moore Memoranda*,' p. 247.

96   *HE* 3:1 and 3:9, ed. Colgrave and Mynors, pp. 214 and 240.

97   See Blair, 'The *Moore Memoranda*,' pp. 246–48. *HE* 3:9, ed. Colgrave and Mynors, p. 240.

98   For discussion of these individual notices, see Blair, 'The *Moore Memoranda*,' pp. 252–57. For a revised view, see D.N. Dumville, 'The two earliest manuscripts of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*?' *Anglo-Saxon* 1 (2007) pp. 55–108 at 59–65.

99   Blair, 'The *Moore Memoranda*,' p. 252.

100 O. Arngart (ed.), *The Leningrad Bede: An Eighth Century Manuscript of the Venerable Bede's Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum in the Public Library, Leningrad*, Early English Manuscripts in facsimile, 2 (Copenhagen 1952). Blair, 'The *Moore Memoranda*,' p. 252; Dumville, 'The two earliest manuscripts,' pp. 65–71 and Plate II; and Story, 'After Bede,' p. 174. Dumville and Story draw attention to similar notations in the sister copy of the St Petersburg Bede, Tiberius A.XIV.

101 Note that Bede dated his letter to Egbert, from 734, by the indiction suggesting he used AD dating for specific purposes: *Epistola ad Ecgbertum Episcopum*, ed. and tr. Grocock and Wood, *The Abbots of Wearmouth and Jarrow*, pp. 124–161 at 160.

Afterword

Bede and Time

Time was a major theme in Bede's works. This book has shown that to understand fully his engagement with chronology and time reckoning in his computus, exegesis or history, we must read across his corpus of writings. Bede's thought on time was greatly influenced by his patristic inheritance and by computistical developments in seventh-century Ireland, and in combining these influences he developed a coherent theology of time: Bede was concerned about the correct calculation of Easter because there should be no disunion amongst God's people as the harmony of heaven should be reflected in the Church; he adopted Vulgate chronology in his chronicles because he believed in the primacy of the Hebrew Bible following close exegetical study; and he counted time from the Incarnation of the Lord (*ab incarnatione Domini*) in the *Historia ecclesiastica* because, for him, this was the fundamental moment in the history of salvation. In addition to Bede's intellectual and devotional interests in time, however, he was interested in his personal chronology and age which he shared with readers of the *HE*. It would be remiss not to reflect on this personal dimension in a book on Bede and Time.

Bede concluded the *HE* with a short autobiographical note in which he wrote that he entered the monastery of Wearmouth when he was seven and spent all of his life there enjoying the delights of learning, teaching and writing. He recorded that he was ordained deacon at 19, and priest at 30 and observed that from then until his 59th year he had committed himself to scriptural exegesis. This is followed by his list of works, after which the book ends with a prayer.[1] The general inference is that Bede was in his 59th year at time of writing, which was 731 according to his summation of the state of Britain at the end of *HE* 5:23; this is also the last date in the chronological recapitulation in *HE* 5:24, which immediately precedes his brief memoir. Consequently, Bede's birth can be dated to 673/4. We cannot be more precise as we do not know, as has been observed several times in this book, whether Bede counted inclusively or exclusively. We also are unaware at what time of year Bede was writing and when in the year he was born.

Bede's personal information is remarkable though somewhat underappreciated. The extent to which people could have known their age in the medieval world is a debated question. Certain ages were important for social commitments such as military service or marriage, and ordination to the priesthood was supposed to

take place at the age of 30, as in Bede's case. However, one wonders how accurate people could be in these matters, especially after childhood, when there was no formal recording of births. Mark Handley has identified a certain imprecision when it comes to age in his impressive study of early medieval inscriptions and epitaphs from Gaul and Spain. He observed that the majority of ages on inscriptions end in zero or five which is statistically unlikely and suggests a practise of 'age-rounding' was taking place.[2] He has also argued that commemoration of the dead was linked to people's life-stage at time of death – for example, women of child-bearing age were publicly mourned because of their importance to society – and suggests that recorded ages are therefore not a passive reflection of age-at-death, but an assertion of a person's 'social' or 'functional' age, for which one does not count from a precise date.[3] This uncertainty about age is reflected in the vast majority of our sources which provide little information on any individual's life-span. Gregory of Tours concluded his *Libri Historiarum* with a brief personal note, which may have inspired Bede's. In addition to naming his works, the personal information that Gregory provided was that he finished writing the *History* in the 21st year after his consecration.[4] There is no indication of how old he was, most probably because Gregory did not know, but he either remembered or recorded the date of his consecration and could count the years from that point to when he finished the *History*. In his list of bishops of Tours, Gregory provided Roman imperial years for the consecrations of the first four bishops and recorded how long all 18 bishops who had preceded him served in office, including any interregnums, indicating such information was preserved. In general, we often know the length of reigns of early medieval kings, bishops and popes, and can frequently determine when they came to office, but we very rarely know how old they were when their reign began or at what age they died.[5]

In contrast, Bede was extraordinarily precise in the matter of his age. Had he said he was in his 60th year or 60 it could be perceived as an example of age-rounding, but this does not apply to being in one's 59th year. In addition to his own age, Bede is also very interested in the ages of others. He stated that Hild of Whitby died at the age of 66 and her life was divided into two equal parts, 33 years in the secular habit and 33 years dedicated to God in the monastic life.[6] As with age-rounding, we should also be attuned to symbolic ages: the association with Bede's belief that Jesus died at the age of 33 is too strong to ignore in this case. However, we can assume that Hild was of recognised old age and probably over 60 when she died. Bede is similarly precise with Theodore of Tarsus, archbishop of Canterbury from 668 to 690; when introducing him Bede noted that he was 66 years old at the time of his consecration as archbishop, and later recorded that he died at the age of 88.[7] One wonders how Bede could have possessed such information. Bede also highlighted that several other men and women in the book had reached advanced ages.[8] In addition, he provided an unusually precise birthdate: all readers of the *HE* know that Eanflæd, princess and later queen of Northumbria, was born on Easter Sunday in 626; while Eanflæd may have known she was born on Easter Sunday, the Dionysian Easter was not used in Northumbria at the time of her birth, so it seems most likely that this AD date was calculated by Bede.[9]

We can also infer that Eanflæd and Oswiu's daughter, Ælfflæd was born in c. 654, as Bede says she was scarcely a year old when Oswiu gave her to the Church in perpetual virginity after defeating Penda at the Battle of the Winwæd in 655.[10]

It is far easier to determine how old someone is when using a linear chronology, such as AD, rather than shorter chronological systems like regnal years or indictions. This is because once the next reign or indiction starts, the year count beings anew, unlike in prospective chronologies such as AD. My suspicion is that when regnal years were the dominant chronological system, who was ruling at the time of a birth may have been remembered by the family or local community, but not knowledge of the precise regnal year. However, exceptions are made in cases of relative dating: that is, when a birth was associated with a significant event that could be independently dated, for example, the accession of a king.[11] Bede's creation of an *Anno Domini* timeline of early British history allowed him to chronologically locate figures, such as Eanflæd, whose birth coincided with other momentous events. So how do we account for Bede's knowledge of his own age? What event could have been associated with his birth?

If Bede's knowledge of his age was reliable, we can disregard a link with the accession of a king. His birth can be dated to 673/4 which places it during the reign of Ecgfrith, who ruled Northumbria from 670 to 685. There is also no record of any major battle in the region with which his birth might have been linked. The one event that we know occurred around this time and in the region of Bede's birth was the foundation of the monastery of Wearmouth by Benedict Biscop, as Bede specifically recorded that he was born in the territory of the monastery.[12] Benedict received a land grant from King Ecgfrith, and such an event would have made an impression on the local community.[13] Both Bede and the anonymous author of the *Life of Ceolfrith* recorded that Wearmouth was founded in AD 674, the second indiction and the fourth year of Ecgfrith, and I have suggested this may reflect some form of foundation charter in the monastery's archives.[14] Peter Hunter Blair has used the evidence of the *Moore Memorandum* to show that the monastery could have been founded in either early 674 or late 673, suggesting the AD date was added to the dating clause later.[15] It is also possible that 674 was the official date of foundation, but the work of establishing the monastery had begun a year or so earlier.[16] The foundation of St Peter's, Wearmouth, in 673/4, therefore corresponds with Bede's birthdate. It is plausible, then, that Bede was born around the time Benedict received this tract of land from the king, and Bede's birth was long afterwards associated with the establishment of the monastery by his local community and family. Bede could have calculated when he was born through this association, as such an example of relative dating would have posed little challenge for a chronographer of his abilities. Having created a linear chronology of his people's past in the *HE*, Bede, fittingly, inserted himself into his framework of time at the conclusion of the book. In doing so, his acuity and critical engagement with time and chronology, as evidenced in his works on computus, exegesis and history, which have been examined throughout this book, are further underlined. Bede's devotional, intellectual and personal interests clearly combined in his life-long commitment to understanding and explicating time.

Notes

1 *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People* [*HE*], bk 5, c. 24, ed. and tr. B. Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors (Oxford 1969, repr. 2001) pp. 566–70.

2 See Handley, *Death, Society and Culture*, pp. 74–75.

3 Handley, *Death, Society and Culture*, pp. 78–88 and 95.

4 Gregory of Tours, *Historiarum libri X*, bk 10:31, ed. Krusch, *MGH Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum*, pp. 31–537 at 536–37.

5 Charles the Bald is a rare exception; he was born on 13 June 823; see Janet Nelson, *Charles the Bald* (Oxford and New York 2013) p. 75.

6 Bede, *HE* 4:23, ed. and tr. Colgrave and Mynors, p. 406.

7 *HE* 4:1 and 5:8, ed. and tr. Colgrave and Mynors, pp. 330 and 472.

8 See Thijs Porck, *Old Age in Early Medieval England: A Cultural History* (Woodbridge 2019) pp. 2–3.

9 *HE* 2:9, ed. and tr. Colgrave and Mynors, p. 164.

10 *HE* 3:24, ed. and tr. Colgrave and Mynors, pp. 290–92. The AD date of Penda's defeat is included in *HE* 5:24, not in the main narrative; for discussion of this, see MacCarron, 'Christology and the future,' pp. 161–79 at 173–76. For Bede's AD chronology in the *HE*, see Chapter Six, pp. 145–9.

11 I am most grateful to an audience member at a paper I presented to the Sheffield Anglo-Saxon and Medieval Society on 28 April 2016 for this observation and indication that she had been born in the year of Elizabeth II's accession. I regret that I did not ask for her name.

12 *HE* 5:24, ed. and tr. Colgrave and Mynors, p. 566: *Qui natus in territorio eiusdem monasterii*. See H.M. Mayr-Harting, *The Venerable Bede, the Rule of St Benedict and Social Class*, Jarrow Lecture 1976, pp. 16–17 and note 88.

13 Bede, *Historia abbatum*, cc. 1 and 4, ed. and tr. Grocock and Wood, *Abbots of Wearmouth and Jarrow*, pp. 22 and 30; Bede, *Homeliarum Evangelii, Libri II*, *Hom*. 1.13, lines 113–16, ed. D. Hurst, *CCSL* 122 (Turnhout 1955) p. 91; and *Vita Ceolfridi*, c. 7, ed. and tr. Grocock and Wood, *Abbots of Wearmouth and Jarrow*, pp. 84–86. See also Ian Wood, *The Most Holy Abbot Ceolfrid*, Jarrow Lecture 1995, pp. 2–5.

14 Bede, *Historia abbatum*, c. 4, ed. and tr. Grocock and Wood, p. 32; and *Vita Ceolfridi*, c. 7, ed. and tr. Grocock and Wood, pp. 84–86. See further in Chapters Five and Six.

15 P. Hunter Blair, 'The *Moore Memoranda* on Northumbrian history,' pp. 245–57 at 255; and see Chapter Six, note 44.

16 See Grocock and Wood, *Abbots of Wearmouth and Jarrow*, pp. 22–23, note 4.

Appendix 1

Table of chapter headings in Bede's *De temporibus* and his principal sources

De temporibus	*Isidore, Etymologiae, books 5 and 6*	*Capitula from unpublished Irish computus (MS Bodley 309)*	*De divisionibus temporum*
		1. Atoms	1. Atomus
1. De Momentis et horis	5.29 Moments and hours	2. Moments	2. Momentum
		3. Minutes	3. Minutum
		4. Puncti	4. Punctus
		5. Hours	5. Hora
		6. Quadrants (natural and created?)	6. Quadrans
2. De die	5.30 Days	7. Days	7. Dies
3. De nocte	5.31 Night		
4. De Hebdomada	5.32 Week	8. Weeks	8. Hebdomada
5. De mense	5.33 Months	9. Lunar months	9. Mensis
		10. Solar months	10. Vicissitudo tirformis
6. De mensibus Romanorum		11. Names used for months and related topics	
7. De solstitio et aequinoctio	5.34 Solstice and equinoxes		
8. De temporibus	5.35 Seasons of the year		
9. De annis	5.36 Years	12. Years	11. Annus
		13. Number of years from Creation to Incarnation and Incarnation to present day	
	5.37 Olympiads, lustrums and jubilees		
10. De bissexto	6.17 Easter Cycle	14. Bissextile	
11. De circulo decemnouenali	6.17 Easter Cycle		12. Cyclus
12. De saltus lunae	6.17 Easter Cycle	15. Saltus	
		16. Roman indiction	

(Continued)

De temporibus	Isidore, Etymologiae, books 5 and 6	Capitula from unpublished Irish computus (MS Bodley 309)	De divisionibus temporum
		17. 19-year cycle	
		18. Lunar cycle	
		19. Discovery of these cycles	
		20. Cycle of Epacts	
		21. Ferials	
		22. The Moon	
		23. Lent	
		24. First moon of the first month	
13. Continentia circuli eiusdem			
14. Argumenta titulorum paschalium			
15. De sacramento temporis paschalis		25. Easter	
		26. De terminis rogationum	
		27. De rogationibus	
		28. De concurrentibus	
		29. Solar and lunar cycle calculated on the fingers	
		30. Solar cycle	
		31. Astronomical questions (including zodiac and eclipses)	
		32. Number of moments, minutes, puncti and hours in a year	
		33. Epacts and ferial data over 100 years	
		34. Computus according to the Greeks and Latins	
		35. Letters of the Greeks	
		36. Anatolius and Macrobius	
		37. Victorius of Aquitaine and Dionysius Exiguus	
		38. Boethius	
		39. Calculations [?]	
16. De mundi aetatibus	5.38 Periods and ages		13. Aetas

De temporibus	Isidore, Etymologiae, books 5 and 6	Capitula from unpublished Irish computus (MS Bodley 309)	De divisionibus temporum
			14. Saeculum
17. Cursus et ordo temporum	5.39 description of historical periods and short chronicle		15. Mundus
18. De secunda aetate	5.39. . .		
19. De tertia aetate	5.39. . .		
20. De quarta aetate	5.39. . .		
21. De quinta aetate	5.39. . .		
22. De sexta aetate	5.39. . .		

Appendix 2

Table of key chronological events in the Chronicle of Eusebius and Jerome

Eusebius		*Jerome*	
Beginning of Jesus's public ministry in the 15th year of Tiberius		*Termination of the Chronicle in 6th consulate of Valens and 2nd of Valentinian*	
		351 years	XV Tiberius and beginning of Jesus' public ministry
548 years	Restoration of the Temple in the 2nd year of Persian king, Darius	899 years	2nd year of Persian king, Darius and Restoration of the temple
		1,155 years	1st Olympiad and Isaiah among the Hebrews
1,060 years	The first temple built by Solomon	1,411 years	Solomon and first building of the Temple
		1,561 years	Capture of Troy and Sampson among the Hebrews
1,539 years	Moses and the Exodus from Egypt	1,890 years	Moses and Cecrops, first king of Attica
2,044 years	Abraham and reign of Ninus and Semiramis	2,395 years	Abraham and the reign of Ninus and Semiramis
		2,395 years	Abraham to present-day
942 years	The Flood to Abraham	942 years	The Flood to Abraham
2,242 years	Adam to the Flood	2,242 years	Adam to the Flood
Total years (Not in Eusebius)	5,228 years	**Total years (in Jerome)**	5,579 years

Appendix 3

Chronological comparison of Bede's chronicles

World Ages	Chronicle of 703			Chronicle of 725		
	AM[1]	Dated Events	Total years	AM	Dated Events	Total years[2]
1st Age (1,656 years)	1	Creation		1	Creation	
	130	Adam (at 130) begat Seth	130	130	Adam (at 130) begat Seth	130
	235	Seth (105) begat Enosh	105	235	Seth (105) begat Enosh	105
	325	Enosh (90) begat Kenan	90	325	Enosh (90) begat Kenan	90
	395	Kenan (70) begat Mahalalel	70	395	Kenan (70) begat Mahalalel	70
	460	Mahalalel (65) begat Jared	65	460	Mahalalel (65) begat Jared	65
	622	Jared (162) begat Enoch	162	622	Jared (162) begat Enoch	162
	687	Enoch (65) begat Methusaleh	65	687	Enoch (65) begat Methusaleh	65
	874	Methusaleh (187) begat Lamech	187	874	Methusaleh (187) begat Lamech	187
	1056	Lamech (182) begat Noah	182	1056	Lamech (182) begat Noah	182
	1656	The Flood (Noah = 600)	600	1656	Flood 600th year of Noah	600
		1st Age = 1656 years			**1st Age = 1656 years**	
2nd Age (292 years)	1658	Shem (100) begat Arpachshad	2	1658	Shem begat Arpachshad at 100, 2 years after Flood	2
	1693	Arpachshad (35) begat Shelah	35	1693	Arpachshad (35) begat Shelah	35
	1723	Shelah (30) begat Heber	30	1723	Shelah (30) begat Hebar	30
	1757	Heber (34) begat Peleg	34	1757	Hebar (34) begat Peleg	34
	1787	Peleg (30) begat Reu	30	1787	Peleg (30) begat Reu	30
	1819	Reu (32) begat Serug	32	1819	Reu (32) begat Serug	32
	1849	Serug (30) begat Nahor	30	1849	Serug (30) begat Nahor	30
	1878	Nahor (29) begat Terah	29	1878	Nahor (29) begat Terah	29
	1948	Terah (70) begat Abraham	70	1948	Terah (70) begat Abraham	70

(Continued)

World Ages	Chronicle of 703			Chronicle of 725		
	AM¹	Dated Events	Total years	AM	Dated Events	Total years²
		2nd Age = 292 years			**2nd Age = 292 years**	
3rd Age (942 years)	2023	Abraham (at 75) came to Canaan	75	2023	Abraham (at 75) came to Canaan	75
				2034	Abraham (86) begat Ishmael	(11)³
	2048	Abraham (100) begat Isaac	25	2048	Abraham (100) begat Isaac	(14)
	2108	Isaac (60) begat Jacob	60	2108	Isaac (60), Esau and Jacob	(60)
	2198	Jacob (90) begat Joseph	90	2238	Jacob (130) went to Egypt	(130)
	2308	Joseph died at 110 years	110		*(Absence of Joseph)*	
	2453	Hebrews slaves 147 years	147	2453	Children of Israel left Egypt	430
	2493	Moses ruled 40 years	40	2493	Moses ruled 40 years	40
	2519	Joshua ruled 26 years	26	2519	Joshua ruled 26 years	26
	2559	Othniel ruled 40 years	40	2559	Othniel ruled 40 years	40
	2639	Ehud ruled 80 years	80	2639	Ehud ruled 80 years	80
	2679	Debora ruled 40 years	40	2679	Deborah with Barak ruled 40 years	40
	2719	Gideon ruled 40 years	40	2719	Gideon ruled 40 years	40
	2722	Abimelech ruled 3 years	3	2722	Abimelech ruled 3 years	3
	2745	Tola ruled 23 years	23	2745	Tola ruled 23 years	23
	2767	Jair ruled 22 years	22	2767	Jair ruled 22 years	22
	2773	Jephthath ruled 6 years	6	2773	Jephthath ruled 6 years	6
	2780	Ibzan ruled 7 years	7	2780	Ibzan ruled 7 years	7
	2790	Elon ruled 10 years	10	2790	Elon ruled 10 years	10
	2798	Abdon ruled 8 years	8	2798	Abdon ruled 8 years	8
	2818	Samson ruled 20 years	20	2818	Samson ruled 20 years	20
	2858	Eli ruled 40 years	40	2858	Eli was priest for 40 years	40
				2870	Samuel ruled 12 years	12
	2890	Samuel and Saul ruled 32 years	32	2890	Saul ruled 20 years	20

3rd Age = 944 years but is 942 according to Bede[4]

4th Age (473 years)	2930	David ruled 40 years	40
	2933	Solomon's Temple built 480th year from Exodus	
	2970	Solomon ruled 40 years	40
	2987	Rehoboam ruled 17 years	17
	2990	Abijah ruled 3 years	3
	3031	Asa ruled 41 years	41
	3056	Jehoshaphat ruled 25 years	25
	3064	Jehoram ruled 8 years	8
	3065	Ahaziah ruled 1 years	1
	3071	Athaliah ruled 6 years	6
	3111	Joash ruled 40 years	40
	3140	Amaziah ruled 29 years	29
	3192	Uzziah ruled 52 years	52
	3208	Jotham ruled 16 years	16
	3224	Ahaz ruled 16 years	16
	3253	Hezekiah ruled 29 years	29
	3308	Manasseh ruled 55 years	55
	3310	Amon ruled 2 years	2
	3341	Josiah ruled 31 years	31
	3344	Nebuchadnezzar captured Judea in 3rd year off Jehoiakim	
	3352	Jehoiakim ruled 11 years	11
	3363	Zedekiah ruled 11 years	11

3rd Age = 942 years

2930	David ruled 40 years	40
2933–41	Solomon built a Temple for the Lord	
2970	Solomon ruled 40 years	40
2987	Rehoboam ruled 17 years	17
2990	Abijah ruled 3 years	3
3031	Asa ruled 41 years	41
3056	Jehoshaphat ruled 25 years	25
3064	Jehoram ruled 8 years	8
3065	Ahaziah ruled 1 year	1
3071	Athaliah ruled 6 years	6
3111	Joash ruled 40 years	40
3140	Amaziah ruled 29 years	29
3192	Azariah (also called Uzziah) ruled 52 years	52
3208	Jotham ruled 16 years	16
3224	Ahaz ruled 16 years	16
3253	Hezekiah ruled 29 years	29
3308	Manasseh ruled 55 years	55
3310	Amon ruled 2 years	2
3341	Josiah ruled 31 years	31
	Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem in Jehoiakim's 3rd year	
3352	Jehoiakim ruled 11 years	11
3363	Zedechiah ruled 11 years	11

(Continued)

World Ages	Chronicle of 703			Chronicle of 725		
	AM[1]	Dated Events	Total years	AM	Dated Events	Total years[2]
		4th Age = 473 years			**4th Age = 473 years**	
5th Age (589 years)				3423	Cyrus ruled 30 years	(30)
				3431	Cambyses ruled 8 years	(8)
				3432	Magi brothers ruled 7 months	(1)
	3434	70-year Hebrew Captivity ended in 2nd y of Darius	70		70-years Jewish Captivity ended in 2nd year of Darius	70
	3468	Darius ruled 36 years	35	3468	Darius ruled 36 years	35
	3489[5]	Xerxes ruled 21 years	21	3488	Xerxes ruled 20 years	20
		(*Absence of Artabanus*)		3489	Artabanus ruled 7 months	1
	3529	Artaxerxes ruled 40 years	40	3529	Artaxerxes ruled 40 years	40
	3548	Darius (the Bastard) ruled 19 years	19	3548	Darius, surnamed Nothus, ruled 19 years	19
	3588	Artaxerxes (II) ruled 40 years	40	3588	Artaxerxes (II) ruled 40 years	40
	3614	Artaxerxes (III) ruled 26 years	26	3614	Artaxerxes (III) ruled 26 years	26
	3618	Xerxes ruled 4 years	4	3618	Arses ruled 4 years	4
	3624	Darius ruled 6 years	6	3624	Darius ruled 6 years	6
	3629	Alexander ruled 5 years after 7 with the Persians	5	3629	Alexander ruled 5 years after Darius (and 7 before)	5
	3669	Ptolemy ruled 40 years	40	3669	Ptolemy ruled Egypt 40 years	40
	3707	Philadelphus ruled 38 years	38	3707	Ptolemy Philadelphus ruled 38 years	38
	3733	Evergetes ruled 26 years	26	3733	Ptolemy Evergetes ruled 26 years	26
	3750	Philopator ruled 17 years	17	3750	Ptolemy Philopator ruled 17 years	17
	3774	Epiphanes ruled 24 years	24	3774	Ptolemy Epiphanes ruled 24 years	24
	3809	Philometer ruled 35 years	35	3809	Ptolemy Philometer ruled 35 years	35
	3838	Evergetes ruled 29 years	29	3838	Ptolemy Evergetes ruled 29 years	29
	3855	Sotor ruled 17 years	17	3855	Ptolemy Physcon, also Sotor, ruled 17 years	17
	3865	Alexander ruled 10 years	10	3865	Ptolemy Alexander ruled 10 years	10
	3873	Ptolemy ruled 8 years	8	3873	Ptolemy Physcon returned from exile	8[6]

Left column

Year	Event	Years
3903	Dionysius ruled 30 years	30
3905	Cleopatra ruled 2 years	2
3910	Julius Caesar ruled 5 years	5
3952	Birth of Jesus (42nd year of Octavian)	42

5th Age = 589 years

1st to 5th Ages = 3952 years (if 3rd = 942 years)[7]

	Year	Event	Years
6th Age (703 years)	3966	Octavian ruled 56 years	14
	3984	Crucifixion of Jesus (18th year of Tiberius)	
	3989	Tiberius ruled 23 years	23
	3993	Gaius Caligula ruled 4 years	4
	4007	Claudius ruled 14 years	14
	4021	Nero ruled 14 years	14
	4023	Titus destroyed Jerusalem (2nd year of Vespasian)	
	4031	Vespasian ruled 10 years	10
	4033	Titus ruled 2 years	2
	4049	Domitian ruled 16 years	16
	4050	Nerva ruled 1 year	1
	4069	Trajan ruled 19 years	19
	4090	Hadrian ruled 21 years	21
	4112[8]	Antoninus Pius ruled 22 years	22
	4131	Antoninus the younger ruled 19 years	19
	4144	Commodus ruled 13 years	13
	4145	Helius Pertinax ruled 1 year	1
	4163	Septimius Severus Pertinax ruled 18 years	18

Right column

Year	Event	Years
3903	Ptolemy Dionysius ruled 30 years	30
3925	Cleopatra ruled 22 years	2
3910	Julius Caesar, 4 years 6 months	5
3952	Birth of Jesus in 42nd year of Caesar Augustus	42

5th Age = 589 years

1st to 5th Ages = 3952 years

Year	Event	Years
3966	Augustus ruled 56 years 6 months	14
3981	Baptism of Jesus in 15th year of Tiberius	
3984	Passion of Jesus in 18th year of Tiberius	
3989	Tiberius ruled 23 years	23
3993	G. Caligula 3years 10 months 8 days	4
4007	Claudius 13years 7 months 28 days	14
4021	Nero ruled 13years 7 months 28 days	14
4031	Vespasian ruled 9 years 11 months and 22 days	10
4033	Titus ruled 2 years 2 months	2
4049	Domitian ruled 16 years 5 months	16
4050	Nerva ruled 1year 4 months 8 days	1
4069	Trajan ruled 19years 6 months 15 days	19
4090	Hadrian ruled 21 years	21
4113	Antoninus Pius 22 years 3 months	23
4132	Marcus Antoninus Verus ruled 19 years and 1 month	19
4145	Lucius Antoninus Commodus ruled 13 years	13
4146	Aelius Pertinax ruled 6 months	1
4163	Severus Pertinax ruled 17 years	17

(Continued)

World Ages	Chronicle of 703			Chronicle of 725		
	AM[1]	Dated Events	Total years	AM	Dated Events	Total years[2]
	4170	Antoninus Caracalla ruled 7 years	7	4170	Antoninus Caracalla ruled 7 years	7
	4171	Macrinus ruled 1 year	1	4171	Macrinus ruled 1 year	1
	4175	Aurelius Antoninus ruled 4 years	4	4175	Marcus Aurelius Antoninus ruled 4 years	4
	4188	Alexander ruled 13 years	13	4188	Aurelius Alexander (Severus) ruled 13 years	13
	4191	Maximus ruled 3 years	3	4191	Maximin ruled 3 years	3
	4198	Gordian ruled 7 years	7	4197	Gordian ruled 6 years	6
	4205	Philip ruled 7 years	7	4204	Philip and son Philip 7 years	7
	4206	Decius ruled 1 year	1	4205	Decius ruled 1 year 3 months	1
	4208	Gallus and Volusianus ruled 2 years	2	4207	Gallus and Volusian ruled 2 years 4 months	2
	4223	Valerian ruled with Gallienus for 15 years	15	4222	Valerian and Gallienus ruled 15 years	15
	4225	Claudius ruled 2 years	2	4224	Claudius ruled 1 year 9 months	2
	4230	Aurelian ruled 5 years	5	4229	Aurelian ruled 5 years 6 months	5
	4231	Tacitus ruled 1 year	1	4230	Tacitus ruled 6 months	1
	4237	Probus ruled 6 years	6	4236	Probus ruled 6 years 4 months	6
	4239	Carus ruled 2 years	2	4238	Carus, wt Carinus and Numerian, ruled 2 years	2
	4259	Diocletian and Maximian ruled 20 years	20	4258	Diocletian and Maximian ruled 20 years	20
					Abs. of Valerius and 1 year omitted	*1*
	4261	Valerius ruled 2 years	2			
	4291	Constantine ruled 30 years	30	4290	Constantine ruled 30 years 10 months	31
	4315	Constantius and Constans ruled 24 years	24	4314	Constantius w. Constantine and Constans ruled 24 years 6 months 13 days	24
	4317	Julian ruled 2 years	2	4316	Julian ruled 2 years 8 months	2
	4318	Jovian ruled 1 year	1	4317	Jovian ruled 8 months	1
				4328	Valentinian and Valens ruled 11 years	11
	4332	Valentinian ruled 14 years	14	4332	Valens wt Gratian and Valentinian II ruled 4 years	4
	4338	Gratian ruled 6 years	6	4338	Gratian and Valentinian II ruled 6 years	6
	4347	Valentinian II ruled with Theodosius for 9 years	9			
	4350	Theodosius wt. Arcadius and Honorius ruled 3 years	3	4349	Theodosius ruled 11 years	11

13	4363	Arcadius and Honorius ruled 13 years	13	4362	Arcadius and Honorius ruled 13 years
15	4378	Honorius with Theodosius II ruled 15 years	15	4377	Honorius and Theodosius the younger (II) ruled 15 years
26	4404	Theodosius II ruled 26 years	26	4403	Theodosius (II) ruled 26 years
7	4411	Marcian ruled 7 years	7	4410	Marcian and Valentinian ruled 7 years
17	4428	Leo I ruled 17 years	17	4427	Leo ruled 17 years
17	4445	Zeno ruled 17 years	17	4444	Zeno ruled 17 years
27	4472	Anastasius ruled 27 years	28	4472	Anastasius ruled 28 years
8	4480	Justin ruled 8 years	8	4480	Justin the Elder ruled 8 years
	4487	1st Dionysian cycle in 6th year of Justinian			Dionysius's paschal tables begin in AD 532 and 248th from Diocletian
39	4519	Justinian ruled 39 years	38	4518	Justinian ruled 38 years
11	4530	Justin II ruled 11 years	11	4529	Justin the younger, 11 years
7	4537	Tiberius ruled 7 years	7	4536	Tiberius ruled 7 years
21	4558	Maurice ruled 21 years	21	4557	Maurice ruled 21 years
8	4566	Phocas ruled 8 years	8	4565	Phocas ruled 8 years
36	4602	Heraclius ruled 36 years	26	4591	Heraclius ruled 26 years
2	4604	Heracleonas wt his mother, Martian ruled 2 years	2	4593	Heracleonas ruled with his mother for 2 years
		Constantine ruled 6 months	1	4594	Constantine ruled 6 months
28	4632	Constans II ruled 28 years	28	4622	Constans II ruled 28 years
17	4649	Constantine IV ruled 17 years	17	4639	Constantine IV ruled 17 years
10	4659	Justinian ruled 10 years	10	4649	Justinian ruled 10 years
3	4662	Leo (Leontius) ruled 3 years	3	4652	Leo ruled 3 years
5	4667	Tiberius III has ruled 5 years	7	4659	Tiberius ruled 7 years
			6	4665	Justinian a 2nd time with son Tiberius for 6 years
			2	4667	Philippicus ruled 1 year 6 months
			3	4670	Anastasius ruled 3 years
			1	4671	Theodosius ruled 1 year
			9	4680	Leo ruled 9 years

6th Age = 715 years (12 years too long)[9]

6th Age = 728 years (3 years too long)[10]

Notes

1 The AM years for the 'Chronicle of 703' are my computed years based on Bede's numbers for generations and reigns throughout the chronicle; these are separately recorded in the 'Total years' column. As frequently observed in this book, the only AM year in the 'Chronicle of 703' is Bede's incarnation date of 3952 (and 5199 'according to others').

   The computed AM years match Bede's AM years from the 'Chronicle of 725' for the first to fourth world ages. There is one discrepancy in the fifth age, AM 3488/9, due to the omission of Artabanus in the first chronicle, and there are discrepancies for about two-thirds of the AM years in the sixth age. This is due to Bede having more accurate information about imperial reigns in 725; see Chapter Four for discussion. When the computed AM differs from that of the 'Chronicle of 725', mine is italicised to indicate the discrepancy at a glance.

2 The 'Total years' column in the 'Chronicle of 725' is taken primarily from Bede's lengths for generations and reigns; however, when such information is not provided, I have calculated the year length based on Bede's AM years. In such cases, e.g., AM 3873, the number is italicised to indicate it is a calculation.

   The number of years in each age can be verified, for both chronicles, by adding up the figures in the 'Total years' column. The figures in brackets should not be added, however, as they duplicate information, e.g., AM 2034. The blanks in these columns are when events are recorded which do not affect the running total of generations and reigns.

3 See note 2.

4 This discrepancy comes from Bede's claim that the Hebrews were enslaved for 147 years, the origin for which is unknown: e.g., Isidore's chronicles have 144 years. Bede dropped this figure in the 'Chronicle of 725,' instead focussing on Scripture's figure of 430 years from the time Abraham arrived in Canaan to the Exodus from Egypt. See Chapter Four for further discussion.

5 See note 1.

6 See note 2.

7 See note 4.

8 See note 1.

9 The excessive length of Bede's sixth age indicates that he had not calculated AM years for this age and was therefore very unlikely to have a source with AM, as, if he had, the discrepancy between the AM length of the sixth age and the real length of the sixth age would have been obvious. Bede told the reader the sixth age had run for 703 years at the opening of the chapter for that age (*DT* 22) and that he was writing in 703 is confirmed by his discussion of the Dionysian *argumenta* in *DT* 15; see Chapter One.

10 The difference between the actual length of the sixth age and Bede's AM years is much smaller than the discrepancy in the first chronicle and confirms that Bede had more accurate sources when compiling the second chronicle; see Chapter Four. The three-year discrepancy between Bede's AM years and the total sum of the regnal years in the sixth age identified here corresponds to the difference between my calculated AD year from Bede's AM and Bede's *HE* AD year for Heraclius' seventh-century reign in Appendix 6. This may indicate Bede had gained further sources for contemporary events between completing *DTR* in 725 and the *HE* in 731.

Appendix 4

Popes in the *Liber Pontificalis*, *De temporibus* and *De temporum ratione*

	Liber Pontificalis	*De temporibus 22*	*De temporum ratione, 66*
1.	Peter	Peter	Peter
2.	Linus		
3.	Cletus		
4.	Clement		
5.	Aneclitus		
6.	Evaristus		
7.	Alexander		
8.	Xystus I		
9.	Telesphorus		
10.	Hyginus		
11.	Pius		Pius
12.	Anicetus		
13.	Soter		
14.	Eleuther		Eleutherius
15.	Victor		Victor
16.	Zephyrinus		
17.	Callistus		
18.	Urban		Urban
19.	Pontian		Pontianus
20.	Anteros		Antherus
21.	Fabian	Fabian	Fabian
22.	Cornelius		Cornelius
23.	Lucius		
24.	Stephen I		Stephen
25.	Xystus II		Sixtus
26.	Dionysius		
27.	Felix I		
28.	Eutychian		Eutychius
29.	Gaius		Gaius
30.	Marcellinus		
31.	Marcellus		
32.	Eusebius		
33.	Miltiades		
34.	Silvester		
35.	Mark		
36.	Julius		*Julius*[1]
37.	Liberius		
38.	Felix II		
39.	Damasus		Damasus

	Liber Pontificalis	*De temporibus 22*	*De temporum ratione, 66*
40.	Siricius		
41.	Anastasius I		
42.	Innocentius		Innocent
43.	Zosimus		
44.	Boniface I		Boniface
45.	Celestine		Celestine
46.	Xystus III		Sixtus
47.	Leo I		*Leo*
48.	Hilarus		
49.	Simplicius		
50.	Felix III		
51.	Gelasius		
52.	Anastasius II		
53.	Symmachus		Symmachus
54.	Hormisdas		
55.	John I		John
56.	Felix IV		
57.	Boniface II		
58.	John II		
59.	Agapitus		
60.	Silverius		
61.	Vigilius		*Vigilius*
62.	Pelagius I		Pelagius
63.	John III		John
64.	Benedict I		
65.	Pelagius II		
66.	Gregory I	Gregory I	Gregory
67.	Sabinian		
68.	Boniface III		Boniface
69.	Boniface IV		Boniface
70.	Deusdedit		
71.	Boniface V		
72.	Honorius		Honorius
73.	Severinus		Severinus
74.	John IV		John
75.	Theodore		Theodore
76.	Martin		Martin
77.	Eugene I		
78.	Vitalian		Vitalian
79.	Adeodatus		
80.	Donus		
81.	Agatho		Agatho
82.	Leo II		
83.	Benedict II		
84.	John V		John
85.	Conon		
86.	Sergius I		Sergius
87.	John VI		John
88.	John VII		John
89.	Sisinninus		
90.	Constantine		Constantine
91.	Gregory II		Gregory

Note

1 Popes in italics are included out of chronological sequence in *DTR*.

Appendix 5

Incarnation dating clauses in the *Historia ecclesiastica*

AD	Event	Form of dating clause	Event Type	Main text	HE 5:24
-60	Caesar's invasion	*ante uero incarnationis Dominicae tempus anno sexagesimo*	Battle	1:2	√
46	Claudius ended the war in Britain	*qui est annus ab incarnatione Domini quadragesimus sextus*	Battle	1:3	√
167	Lucius wrote to Pope Eleutherius from Britain	X	Letter	(1:4)	√
156	Marcus Antoninus Verus became emperor	*Anno ab incarnatione Domini centesimo quinquagesimo sexto*	Accession	1:4	X
189	Severus became emperor	*Anno ab incarnatione Domini CLXXXVIIII*	Accession	1:5	√
286	Diocletian became emperor	*Anno incarnationis dominicae CCLXXXVI*	Accession	1:6	X
377	Gratian became emperor	*Anno ab incarnatione Domini CCCLXXVII*	Accession	1:9	X
381	Maximus was made emperor in Britain and killed Gratian in Gaul	X	Accession	(1:9)	√
394	Arcadius became emperor	*Anno ab incarnatione Domini CCCXCIIII*	Accession	1:10	X
407	Honorius Augustus became emperor	*Anno ab incarnatione Domini CCCCVII*	Accession	1:11	X
409	Rome sacked by the Goths and Roman withdrawal from Britain	X	Battle	(1:11)	√
423	Theodosius the Younger became emperor	*Anno Dominicae incarnationis CCCCXXIII*	Accession	1:13	X
430	Palladius was sent by Pope Celestine to Ireland	X	Mission	(1:13)	√
449	Marcian became emperor	*Anno ab incarnatione Domini CCCCXLVIIII*	Accession	1:15	√
538	Eclipse of the sun	X	Astronomy	X	√
540	Eclipse of the sun	X	Astronomy	X	√
547	Ida, founder of the Northumbrian royal family, began to reign	X	Accession	X	√

(Continued)

(Continued)

AD	Event	Form of dating clause	Event Type	Main text	HE 5:24
565	Columba established Iona	*Siquidem anno incarnationis dominicae quingentesimo sexagesimo quinto*	Iona	3:4	√
582	Maurice became emperor	*Siquidem anno ab incarnatione Domini DLXXXII*	Accession	1:23	X
596	Gregory sent missionaries to the Anglo-Saxons	X	Mission	(1:23)	√
597	Gregorian missionaries arrive in Britain	X	Mission	(1:25)	√
601	Gregory sent the pallium to Augustine and additional missionaries	X	Mission	(1:29)	√
603	Æthelfrith defeated the Irish in Britain and Phocas became emperor	*anno ab incarnatione Domini DCIII*	Battle & Accession	1:34	√
604	Augustine consecrated Mellitus and Justus, and Mellitus converted East Saxons	*Anno dominicae incarnationis DCIIII*	Consecration	2:3	√
605	Pope Gregory died	*id est anno dominicae incarnationis DXV*	Death	2:1	√
616	Æthelberht of Kent died	*Anno ab incarnatione dominica DCXVI*	Death	2:5	√
619	Boniface V became pope	*anno incarnationis dominicae DCXVIIII*	Consecration	2:7	X
625	Paulinus consecrated as bishop	*anno ab incarnatione Domini DCXXV*	Consecration	2:9	√
626	Baptism of Eanflæd, daughter of Edwin	X	Baptism	(2:9)	√
627	Baptism of Edwin and the Northumbrians	*annus dominicae incarnationis DCXXVII*	Baptism	2:14	√
633	Death of Edwin and Paulinus returned to Kent	*anno dominicae incarnationis DCXXXIII*	Death	2:20	√
634	Letter from Pope Honorius to Archbishop Honorius	*anno dominicae incarnationis DCXXXIIII*	Letter	2:18	X
640	Eadbald of Kent died	*Anno dominicae incarnationis DCXL*	Death	3:8	√
642	Death of Oswald of Northumbria	X	Death	(3:9)	√
644	Paulinus died	*ab incarnatione dominica anno DCXLIIII*	Death	3:14	√
651	Oswine of Deira was murdered and Aidan died	X	Death	(3:14)	√
653	Archbishop Honorius died	*anno ab incarnatione Domini DCLIII*	Death	3:20	X
653	Peada and the Middle Angles convert to Christianity	X	Mission	(3:21)	√
655	Death of Penda of Mercia and conversion of his kingdom	X	Death & Mission	(3:24)	√
664	Colman and the Irish left Northumbria	*anno dominicae incarnationis DCLXquarto*	Council	3:26	√
664	Eclipse of the sun and plague	*anno dominicae incarnationis DCLXquarto*	Astronomy	3:27	√
664	Wilfrid and Chad consecrated bishops	X	Consecration	(3:28)	√

Year	Event	Latin phrase	Type	Ref	
664	Deusdedit of Canterbury died	X	Death	(4:1)	X
664	Eorcenberht of Kent died	X	Death	(4:1)	✓
668	Theodore consecrated bishop by Pope Vitalian	*anno dominicae incarnationis DCLXVIII*	Consecration	4:1	✓
670	Oswiu of Northumbria died	*Anno dominicae incarnationis DCLXXmo*	Death	4:5	✓
673	Synod of Hertford and Egbert of Kent died	*anno ab incarnatione Domini DCCLXXXtertio* (sic)	Council, Death	4:5	✓
675	Wulfhere of Mercia died	X	Death	X	✓
676	Æthelred of Mercia devastated Kent	*Anno autem dominicae incarnationis DCLXXVI*	Battle	4:12	✓
678	Appearance of a comet and Wilfrid driven from his see – Bosa, Eadhæd and Eata consecrated	*Anno dominicae incarnationis DCLXXVIII*	Astronomy; Consecration	4:12	✓
679	Death of Ælfwine, b. Ecgfrith of Northumbria	X	Death	(4:21)	✓
680	Synod of Hatfield	X	Council	(4:17)	✓
680	Hild of Whitby died	*anno dominicae incarnationis DCLXXX*	Death	4:23	✓
684	Ecgfrith of Northumbria sent army to Ireland	*Anno dominicae incarnationis DCLXXXIIII*	Battle	4:26	X
685	Death of Ecgfrith in battle against the Picts	X	Battle	(4:26)	✓
685	Hlothhere of Kent died	*ab incarnatione dominica DCLXXXV*	Death	4:26	✓
688	Cædwalla of the West Saxons went to Rome	X	Abdication	(5:7)	✓
689	Cædwalla of the West Saxons was baptised and died at Rome	*anno ab incarnatione Domini DCLXXXVIIII*	Baptism & Death	5:7	X
690	Theodore of Canterbury died	*id est DCXCmo incarnationis dominicae*	Death	5:8	✓
692	Berhtwold elected to the See of Canterbury and consecrated the following year	*anno dominicae incarnationis DCXCmo secondo*	Election & consecration	5:8	X
697	Queen Osthryth of Mercia was murdered by her nobles	X	Death	X	✓
698	Berhtred, an ealdorman of Northumbria, killed by the Picts	X	Death	X	✓
704	Æthelred of Mercia abdicated and became a monk	X	Abdication	(5:19)	✓
705	Aldfrith of Northumbria died	*Anno dominicae incarnationis DCCV*	Death	5:18	✓
709	Cenred of Mercia went to Rome	X	Abdication	(5:19)	✓
711	Ealdorman Berhtfrith fought the Picts	X	Battle	X	✓
715	Iona followed the incorrect Easter until 715	*ad annum dominicae incarnationis DCCXV*	Iona	3:4	X

(Continued)

(Continued)

AD	Event	Form of dating clause	Event Type	Main text	HE 5:24
716	Osred of Northumbria was killed and Iona accepted the Dionysian Easter	Siquidem anno ab incarnatione Domini DCCXVI	Death & Iona	5:22	√
716	Ceolred of Mercia died	X	Death	X	√
721	Death of John of Beverly	anno ab incarnatione dominica DCCXXI	Death	5:6	X
725	Wihtred of Kent died	Anno dominicae incarnationis DCCXXV	Death	5:23	√
729	Egbert of Iona died	id est anno dominicae incarnationis DCCXXVIIII; annoque dominicae incarnationis DCCXXVIIII	Death	3:27; 5:22	√
729	Two comets appeared, and Egbert of Iona and Osric of Northumbria died	Anno dominicae incarnationis DCCXXVIIII	Astronomy, Death	5:23	√
731	Berhtwold of Canterbury died and Tatwine was consecrated archbishop in his place	Anno dominicae incarnationis DCCXXXI	Death, consecration	5:23	√
731	Summary of the state of Britain	dominicae autem incarnationis anno DCCXXXI	Summary	5:23	X

Appendix 6

Comparison of Bede's AD years in the *Historia ecclesiastica* with AD years calculated from his chronicles

Event	Chron. of 703		Chron. of 725		HE	Modern
	AM	AD	AM	AD	AD	AD
Final year of Claudius's invasion of Britain	3997	45	3997	45	46	47
Marcus Antoninus Verus became emperor	4112/3	160/1	4113/4	161/2	156	161
Severus became emperor	4145/6	193/4	4146/7	194/5	189	193
Diocletian became emperor	4239/40	287/8	4238/9	286/7	286	285
Gratian became emperor	4332/3	380/1	4332/3	380/1	377	376
Arcadius and Honorius became emperors	4350/1	398/9	4349/50	397/8	394	395
Theodosius the Younger became emperor	4378/9	426/7	4377/8	425/6	423	423
Marcian became emperor	4404/5	452/3	4403/4	451/2	449	450
Maurice became emperor	4537/8	585/6	4536/7	584/5	582	582
24th year of Heraclius	4589/90	637/8	4588/9	636/7	634	633/4

This table compares Bede's AD years for Roman emperors in the *HE* with his AM years as these are the only events that can meaningfully be compared to the chronology of his chronicles which are based on imperial chronology for the sixth age. The AM years for the 'Chronicle of 703' are my calculations based on the information Bede provided; see Appendix 3, note 1. I have provided double dates in most cases because emperors are dated by the final year of their reign in the chronicles, but by the year of their accession in the *HE*. As it is unclear if Bede counted inclusively or exclusively, I cannot be certain if an imperial reign should count from the last year of the previous emperor or the year following. I have provided both possibilities for the sake of comprehensiveness, as it does not occlude the overall pattern presented here.

In calculating AD years from the chronicles, I have subtracted 3,952 from the AM number, whether provided by Bede in the 'Chronicle of 725' or my calculation from the 'Chronicle of 703'. As noted, it is unclear whether Bede counted inclusively or exclusively, but as the total number of years in the first five ages add up to 3,952, I have elected to subtract that amount from the AM year to calculate

AD years in this table. Following these calculations, Jesus was born in what corresponds to 1BC; as we are also unsure when Bede began the year, we are unable to use any other information to corroborate or challenge the assumptions underlying my calculations. Should someone wish to equate AM 3952 with AD 1, they should subtract 3,951 from the AM years; when calculating on this basis, the overall pattern of results does not change.

These figures must, of course, be treated with caution; the overall pattern of calculations is my primary focus and we can see that the nearer Bede gets to his own time the more accurate his AD dates in the *HE* become, whereas the opposite occurs when converting his AM years to AD. This is because Bede almost certainly used Dionysian tables, which contained AD years and the indiction cycle in parallel columns when calculating AD years in the *HE* and as many of his sources contained indiction dates (for example, the papal letters) these would have been relatively easy calculations.[1] Such a conversion is more accurate than attempting to synchronise imperial years with a linear chronology, whether AM or AD. We can see that as Bede's imperial chronology moves forward in time more errors are introduced and there are also discrepancies between his chronicles (see Appendix 3, and Chapter Four for discussion); in contrast, Bede's biggest errors in the *HE* are for years in the first and second centuries, which pre-date the adoption of the indiction cycle.

A further note of caution is to remind the reader that all of these AD years, whether Bede's or ours, are retrospective calculations based on chronological synchronism and should be treated as such.[2]

Notes

1 Complications arose for events that occurred in September to December as the indiction cycle began in September while the Julian year, then as now, began in January. Bede appears not to have taken account of this difference as the dates of the Synods of Hertford and Hatfield, both of which occurred in September, appear to be misdated by a year; see Harrison, *The Framework of Anglo-Saxon History*, pp. 83–85 and Chapter Six, pp. 146–7.

2 On chronological synchronism, see the engaging discussion by Denis Feeney, *Caesar's Calendar: Ancient Time and the Beginning of History* (Berkeley and London 2007) esp. pp. 7–66.

Glossary

The following is intended to provide the reader with a basic working knowledge of the relevant computistical concepts. For a more in-depth and technical discussion, see Immo Warntjes, 'Basic computistical glossary,' in *The Munich Computus: Text and Translation, Irish Computistics Between Isidore of Seville and the Venerable Bede and Its Reception in Carolingian Times*, ed. and tr. I. Warntjes (Stuttgart 2010) pp. 341–53.

Words in bold are included in the Glossary.

19-year cycle: The underlying principle behind Alexandrian Easter calculations, it is the most accurate harmonisation of the **Luni-solar cycle**

532-year cycle: The complete cycle after which time all calendrical data in the **Julian calendar** repeat in sequence; it is formed when the 28-year **Solar cycle** is multiplied by the **19-year cycle**

84-year cycle: An Easter table that repeats after 84-years, the 84-year cycle used in the Insular Church had a 14-year *Saltus* and was known as the *Latercus*; an earlier 84-year cycle from Rome used a 12-year *Saltus*

Bissextile day (bissextus):   An extra day added to the solar calendar every four years, a bissextile year, to harmonise the **Julian calendar** with the movement of the sun (leap-day, 29 February in modern calendars); the **Solar year**, according to the Julian calendar, was 365-and-a-quarter days; when reconciling solar and lunar calendars, seventh-century computists included a bissextile day in their **Lunar cycle**

Common lunar year: A **Lunar year** with 12 lunar months, compared to **Embolismic years** which had 13 lunar months to compensate for the 11-day difference between a solar year and a Common lunar year

Concurrent: The weekday of a fixed date in the **Julian calendar**, 24 March in the **Dionysian Easter** table, and used to determine Easter Sunday; weekday data are dependent on the 28-year **solar cycle**, which means the concurrent recurs in exactly the same order every 28 years

Dionysian Easter: The Easter table of Dionysius Exiguus (c. AD 470 – c. 544), a 95-year table based on Alexandrian principles comprising five **19-year cycles** prepared in AD 525 to run from 532–626 inclusive with **lunar limits** of *luna* xv to xxi; the version used in the Insular World of the seventh and

early eighth centuries was an extension made by Felix Gillitanus in 616 of another five 19-year cycles that ran from 627–721 inclusive

Embolismic year: A **Lunar year** with an extra lunar month to compensate for the 11-day difference between a solar year and a **Common lunar year**

Epacts: The days added to the moon to correlate **Lunar** and **Solar cycles**; 12 lunar months add up to 354 days, that is 29.5 days, or six **Hollow months** and six **Full months**, meaning the **Lunar year** is 11 days shorter than a regular solar year, epacts are introduced through adding a thirteenth lunar month of 30 days (**Full month**) approximately every three years in the **Luni-solar cycle**

Equinox: Occurs twice yearly, spring and autumn, when day and night are of equal length; the **Vernal equinox** came to be dated to 21 March in Alexandrian computistics, but some reckonings, such as the *Latercus*, use an older date of 25 March; the autumnal equinox is in September

Full month: Lunar month of 30 days; a calendrical convenience to harmonise the lunar and solar calendars as a lunar month is 29.53059 days; a **Lunar year** is comprised of six Full months and six **Hollow months**

Hendecad: An 11-year cycle which formed the second part of the **19-year cycle**, the first part was an eight-year cycle known as the **Ogdoad**

Hollow month: Lunar month of 29 days; a calendrical convenience to harmonise the lunar and solar calendars as a lunar month is 29.53059 days; a **Lunar year** is comprised of six **Full months** and six Hollow months

Julian calendar: Roman calendar of 12 months, 365.25 days, with a **Bissextile day** every fourth year to bring the calendar into line with the sun; named after Julius Caesar who reformed the Roman calendar

Latercus: An **84-year** Easter cycle probably invented early in the fifth century, arguably by Sulpicius Severus, and most associated with the Insular Church; it used a 14-year *Saltus* and had **lunar limits** of *luna* xiv to xx

Lunar cycle: The time period of the first recurrence of a fixed sequence of lunar ages on any given **Julian calendar** date to harmonise lunar data with the solar year

Lunar limits: The dates on which Easter Sunday can fall following the provision of Exodus 12:15 that unleavened bread should be eaten for seven days after the fourteenth day of the moon; these were variously interpreted as running from *luna* xiv – xx (*Latercus*), *luna* xv – xxi (**Dionysian Easter**), and *luna* xvi – xxii (**Victorian Easter**)

Lunar year: A period of 12 lunar months, six **Full months** and six **Hollow months**, which equals 354 days; to compensate for the 11-day difference between a solar year and a **common lunar year**, certain years were **Embolismic years** and consisted of 13 lunar months

Luni-solar cycle: Time period that harmonises lunar and solar data so that weekday and lunar data recur in the same order on any **Julian calendar** date after a certain specified number of years, e.g., the **Metonic cycle**

Metonic Cycle: The most accurate harmonisation of the **Luni-solar cycle**, it is named after the fifth-century BC Athenian astronomer, Metos, and is a **19-year cycle** that almost perfectly aligns 19 solar years with 235 lunar months

Ogdoad: An eight-year cycle which formed the first part of the **19-year cycle**, the second part was an 11-year cycle known as the **Hendecad**

Quartodeciman: Literally 14 and means the practise of celebrating Easter on the fourteenth day of the moon (*luna* xiv) regardless of the day of the week on which it fell, attributed to the apostle John

Saltus: A lunar day that was subtracted from a **Luni-solar cycle** to align the solar and lunar calendars, one lunar day was subtracted from a **19-year cycle**, six from the **84-year cycle**, e.g., every 14 years in the *Latercus*

Solar cycle: A 28-year cycle of the seven-day week multiplied by the four-year leap-year cycle, after which time the dates of the months and the days of the week repeat exactly in sequence

Solar year: The time taken for one course of the sun through the zodiac, in the **Julian calendar**, this was believed to be 365.25 days; the actual solar year is 365.242189 days which was recognised in the Gregorian calendar reforms of the sixteenth century

Vernal Equinox: The date in spring when day and night are of equal length, it is dated to 21 March in Alexandrian computistics, but some reckonings, such as the *Latercus*, used an older date of 25 March; the corresponding autumnal equinox occurs in September

Victorian Easter: Easter cycle of Victorius of Aquitaine, created in 457, based primarily on Alexandrian principles. It used the old Roman **Lunar limits** of xvi to xxii, and is a **532-year cycle**, that is, 28 **Solar cycles** multiplied by the **19-year cycle** (28 x 19 = 532), after which time – in the **Julian calendar** – all calendrical data (solar, lunar, and weekday) repeat in sequence

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